NEW

100% UNOFFICIAL

ARSENAL

ALL-STARS

8 AMAZING POSTERS INSIDE

DISCOVER OVER 70 OF THE GREATEST GUNNERS TO WEAR THE FAMOUS RED-AND-WHITE SHIRT

ADAMS ★ SALIBA ★ SMITH ★ NWANERI ★ VIEIRA ★ PIRES ★ ROCASTLE ★ & MANY MORE

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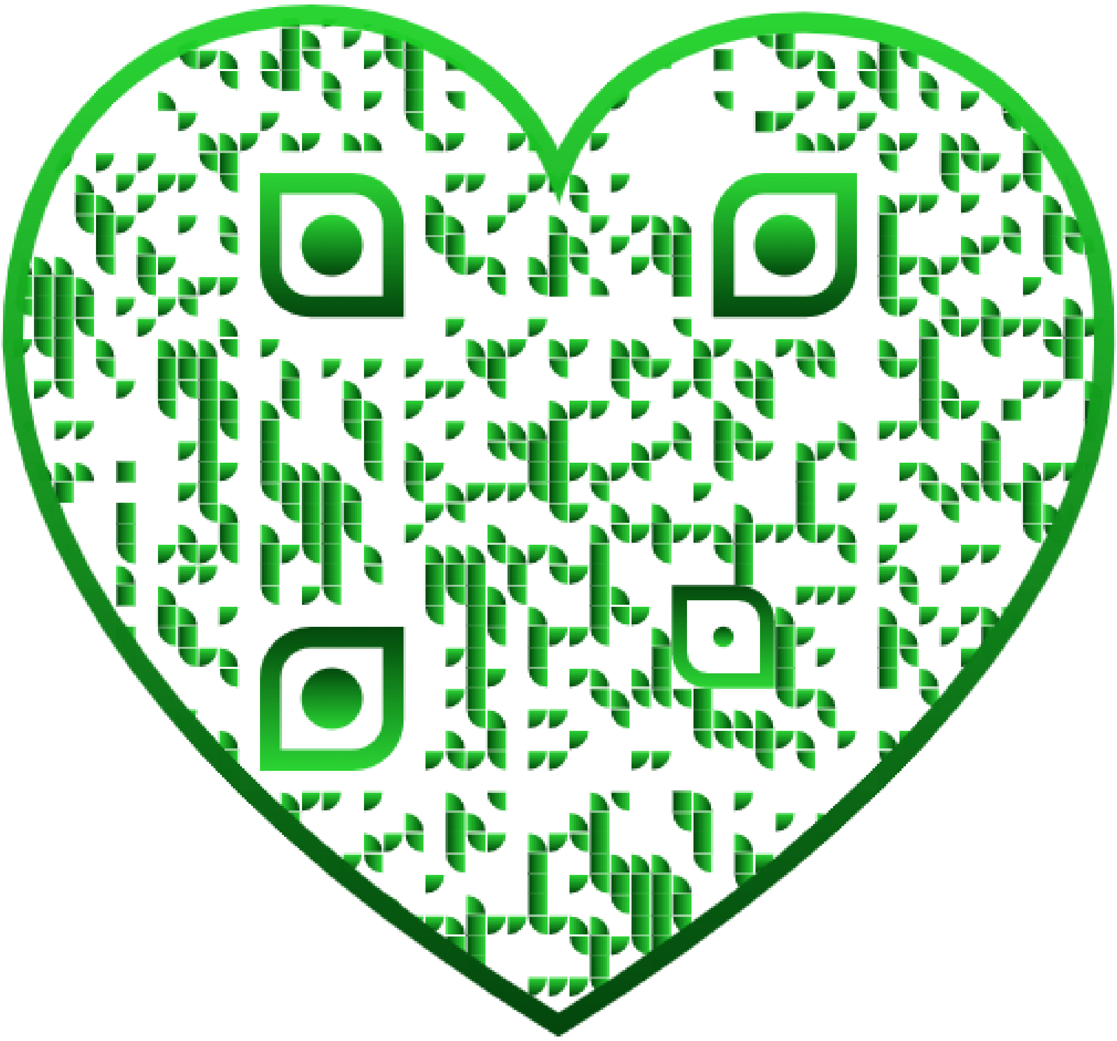
Digital Edition
FUTURE
FIRST EDITION



CHAMPIONS 2003/2004
BARCLAYCARD
2003
–
2004

ARSENAL ALL-STARS

eurostar
WHL '71

The history of Arsenal Football Club is filled with a wealth of iconic moments, incredible achievements and remarkable records. **Three league and cup Doubles. The Invincibles season. A record 14 FA Cup wins. Winning the title at their bitter rival's ground… twice. And, of course, that famous night at Anfield in 1989.** And that's just a few examples. But none of this would have been possible without the players who pulled on that famous red-and-white shirt and wrote their name into Arsenal folklore.

From the goalscoring exploits of Thierry Henry and Ian Wright to the brilliance of Dennis Bergkamp and Liam Brady. And from the defensive discipline of the famous back four and David Seaman's safe hands to the heroics of Charlie George, Michael Thomas and Alan Smith. Inside we celebrate some of the greatest players in Arsenal's history, covering the eras of Herbert Chapman, George Graham and Arsène Wenger, and everything in between.

It's not just the players of the past who we're here to recognise, however. We also feature Arsenal's biggest current stars, too, including Hale End's very own Bukayo Saka, Ethan Nwaneri and Myles Lewis-Skelly, fan favourites Declan Rice, Gabriel and Leah Williamson, as well as some of the latest additions to the Arsenal family. You'll also discover the club's greatest managers and our top 10 moments from Arsenal's history, while we even bring you eight fantastic posters of your favourite players.

Up the Gunners!

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

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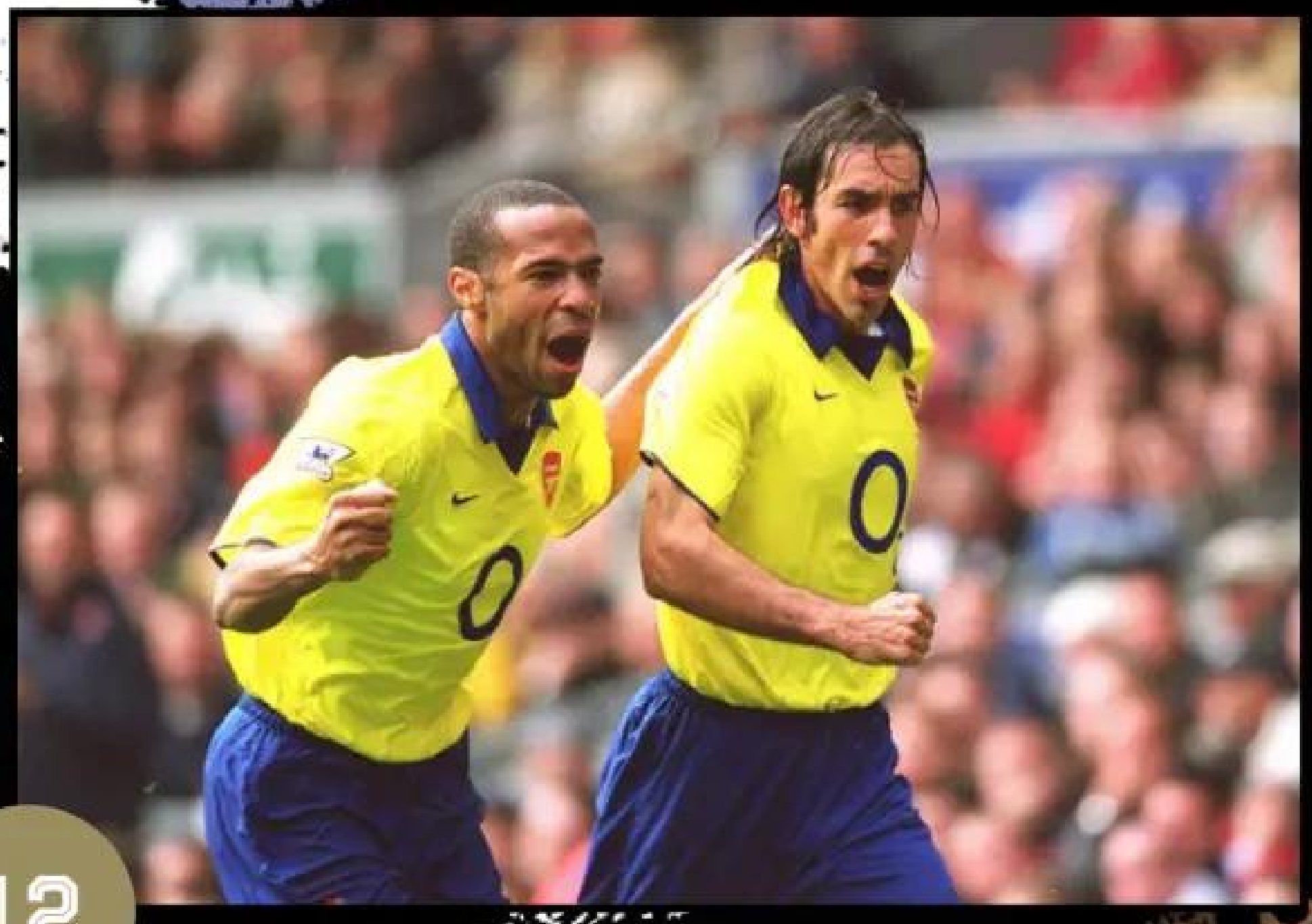

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20

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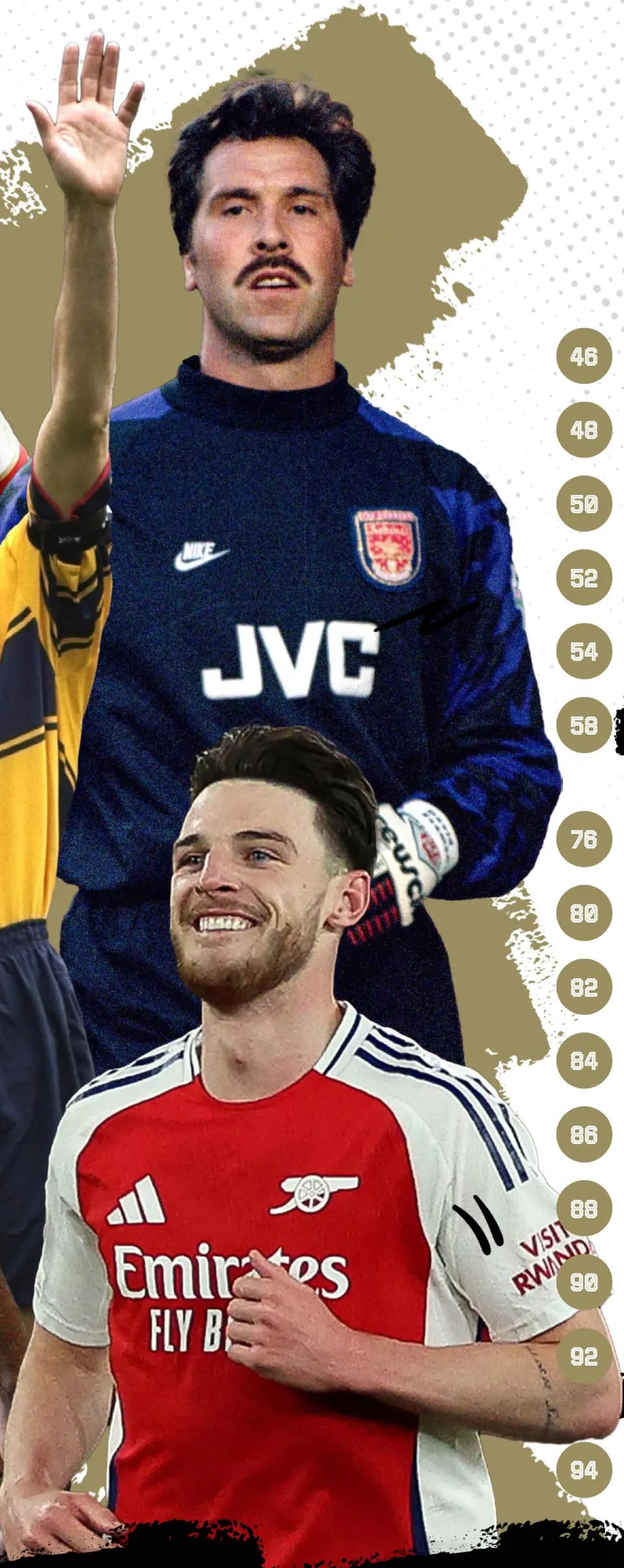

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Chris Lobina / Getty, Alex Livesey / Getty, Ian Walton / Getty, Stuart MacFarlane / Getty, Shaun Botterill / Getty, Mark Leech/Offside / Getty, ADRIAN DENNIS / Getty

“THE HALE END SUPERSTAR WAS NO ORDINARY TEENAGER”

BUKAYO SAKA

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
263
GOALS
70

From humble beginnings, Arsenal's own Starboy has become one of the best players in the world

Bukayo Saka was just 18 years old when he inherited the No.7 shirt – one of the most iconic in the sport, and one with particular significance at Arsenal. Robert Pires, David Rocastle and Alexis Sánchez had all worn the No.7, and Saka was to become a worthy recipient over time.

It was proof that the Hale End superstar was no ordinary teenager. After bursting into the Gunners side as an emergency left-back, Saka carved out a niche as a right-winger, ousting club-record signing Nicolas Pépé from the side with his speed and precision cutting in on his left foot.

Saka is one of Arsenal's most adored sons. An intelligent, polite and mature character, he's often seen with a smile on his face and is a favourite of team-mates – but give him the ball and he can destroy opponents. Still in his early 20s, that No.7 shirt may well be his at Arsenal and England for another decade.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **5 SEPTEMBER 2001**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **2018-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **7**

STATS & RECORDS

26 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN 37 GAMES IN 2024-25

50 THE YOUNGEST PLAYER TO PLAY 50 GAMES FOR THE GUNNERS

83 THE MOST CONSECUTIVE PREMIER LEAGUE GAMES FOR ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FA CUP

BREAKTHROUGH IN FRANKFURT

Saka netted a stunning curling effort against Eintracht Frankfurt in the Europa League in 2019, for his first goal in an Arsenal shirt. The youngster registered two assists, too, and was one of the bright sparks in a tough autumn for the club, before establishing himself as a regular. When he signed a new contract the next summer, Mikel Arteta claimed Saka, "represents every value that this football club stands for".

Main image Julian Finney/Getty **Boxout** David Price/Getty

Matthew Ashton - AMA/Getty

NORTH LONDON IS RED

In Arsenal's *All or Nothing* Amazon documentary, Saka and Emile Smith Rowe were seen in September 2021 talking about how amazing it would be to score against rivals Tottenham Hotspur in a North London Derby – and a few days later, they both did. The performance was one of the first big-game moments for Saka and marked the ascension of Arteta's side to fighting for Champions League football. It still stands as a memorable day for Gooners.

David Price/Getty

SHINING UNDER THE LIGHTS

With Champions League football returning to the Emirates, Saka has taken a leading role in the squad. The England international scored his first knockout goal against Bayern Munich in 2024, before captaining the Gunners to a win against PSG at home (with another goal), then scoring against Real Madrid in the Bernabéu. Spanish media labelled him 'the torturer' of Los Blancos – and his stock is only rising.

DID YOU KNOW? **SAKA SCORED ARSENAL'S 2,000TH PREMIER LEAGUE GOAL IN A VICTORY OVER ASTON VILLA IN 2022.**

FA CUP GLORY

Saka played a pivotal role in trophy success in just his first season in the senior Arsenal team. COVID-19 meant that football was played behind closed doors, but it couldn't stop Arteta's Arsenal from an impressive cup run in which the Gunners beat Manchester City, then Chelsea at Wembley to lift the FA Cup. As a reward of sorts, Saka was given the hallowed No.7 shirt.

Mark Pain/Alamy

FUN FACT

In 2024, Saka launched his own range of peri-peri sauce for restaurant, Nando's.

TONY ADAMS

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
669

GOALS
48

With hundreds of mammoth performances and a host of major trophies across three decades, there's no one more fitting of the title, 'Mr Arsenal'

In 2024, Paul Merson told *FourFourTwo* that Tony Adams was an Invincible.

"We only lost one game in 1991 when we won the league," Merson recalled. "And Tony wasn't there for that one."

It's a reminder of the defender's strength. A born general, Adams took the captaincy at 21, dragging Arsenal to the title at Anfield in the dying embers of the 1988-89 season and establishing himself as the greatest defender of his generation. He would fight addiction, though, returning to become a cornerstone of Arsène Wenger's first side. He was wise, dependable and unbelievably courageous.

As the oldest player with a statue outside the Emirates, Adams is cast in bronze with his arms spread wide, in celebration of scoring the goal that sealed the title and first part of the Double in 1998. Those broad shoulders carried the Gunners for a long time – and for many, there has been no greater captain ever to wear the hallowed armband.

"THAT SUMS IT ALL UP!"

Adams' goal against Everton on the final day of the 1998 Premier League season was the perfect way to seal the title. The captain put the cherry on the cake for the 4-0 win, with a darting run to the edge of the area, capitalising on a long ball from fellow centre-back Steve Bould to volley the ball into the net. "Would you believe it?" exclaimed commentator Martin Tyler, before announcing that Adams had summed up the afternoon exquisitely.

DID YOU KNOW? HIS LAST ARSENAL GAME WAS THE 2002 FA CUP FINAL, IN WHICH HE LIFTED THE TROPHY.

TONY ADAMS

FUN FACT

Adams was the last player to captain and score for England at the old Wembley Stadium.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **10 OCTOBER 1966**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **191CM (6'3")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1983-2002**
NUMBER: **6**

STATS & RECORDS

14 YEARS AS ARSENAL CAPTAIN

3 THE ONLY PLAYER IN ENGLISH FOOTBALL HISTORY TO CAPTAIN A SIDE TO TOP-FLIGHT TITLES IN THREE DECADES

3 TIMES ARSENAL PLAYER OF THE SEASON

MAJOR HONOURS

- 2x FIRST DIVISION
- 2x PREMIER LEAGUE
- 3x FA CUP
- 2x LEAGUE CUP
- 1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

Main Image Ross Kinnaird / Getty **Boxout** Tony Marshall / Alamy

FUN FACT

Pires played for legendary Brazilian Zico, who coached him at FC Goa.

DID YOU KNOW? WHEN PIRES FACED ARSENAL IN 2009 WITH VILLARREAL, GOONERS SANG HIS NAME ACROSS BOTH LEGS.

ROBERT PIRES

French genius Robert Pires became untouchable at Arsenal – after wondering what he'd let himself in for

Robert Pires was left on the bench by Arsène Wenger upon joining Arsenal. It wasn't that he wasn't good enough: Wenger just wanted to show Pires how brutal English football could be.

Pires wasn't naturally a fighter: he could shrink with criticism. Wenger had to allow his star to bloom at his own pace.

Sure enough, the Frenchman blossomed by winning FWA Footballer of the Year in 2001-02, his second campaign, despite suffering an ACL injury. He came back strongly, however, with an FA Cup final win a year later, before getting 23 Premier League goals and assists when Arsenal went Invincible.

It said it all that when injury-stricken Pires lifted the Premier League trophy in 2002, his team-mates took to their knees to praise the midfield maestro. He was adored by colleagues and Gooners alike: not bad, considering some thought he was too soft for the Premier League...

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **29 OCTOBER 1973**
BIRTHPLACE: **REIMS, FRANCE**
NATIONALITY: **FRENCH**
HEIGHT: **187CM (6'2")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2000-06**
NUMBER: **7**

STATS & RECORDS

8 GOALS AGAINST TOTTENHAM IN ALL COMPETITIONS

3 PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

14 PREMIER LEAGUE GOALS EVERY SEASON FROM 2002-03 TO 2004-05

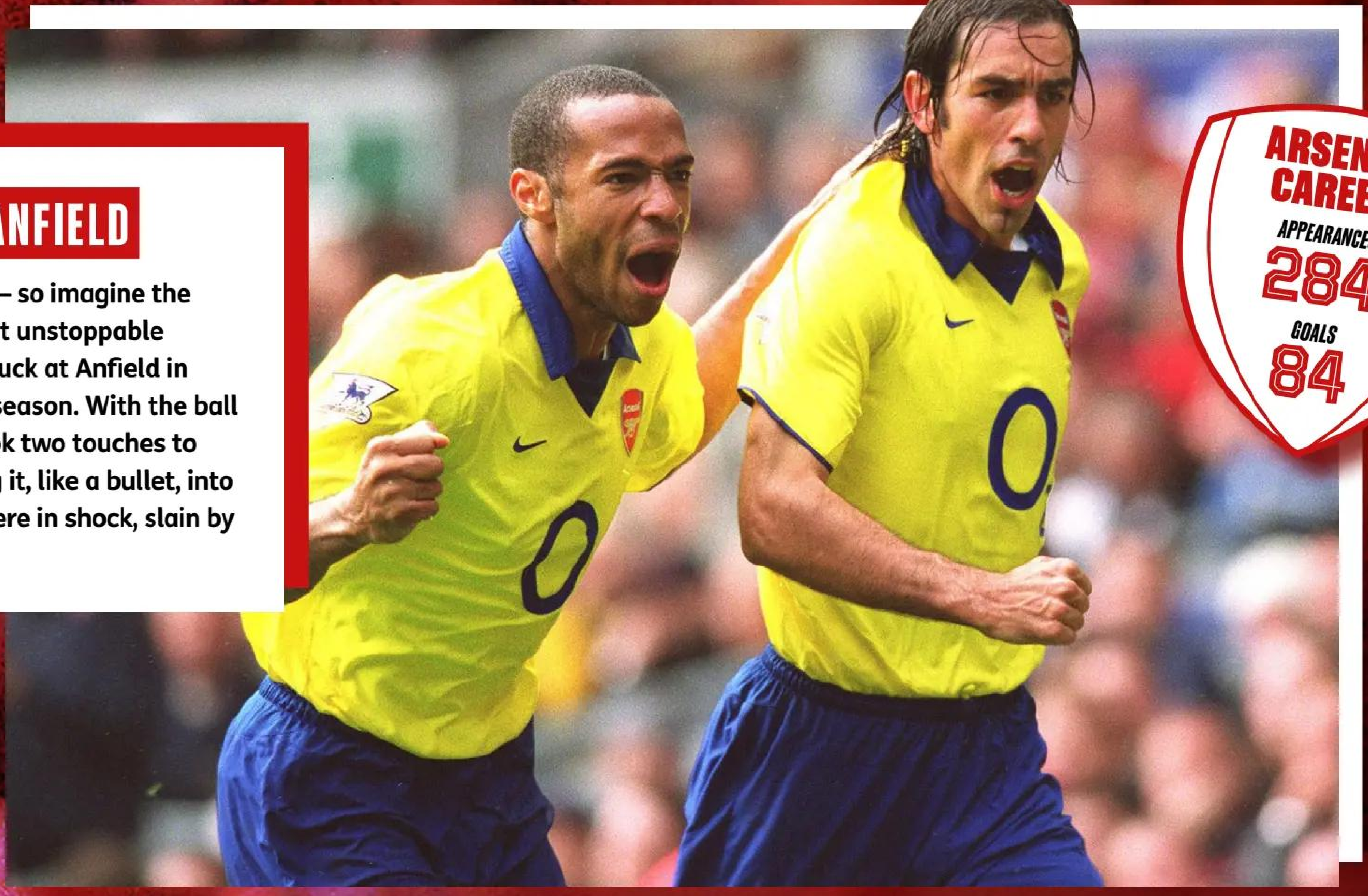
MAJOR HONOURS

2x PREMIER LEAGUE

2x FA CUP

WHEN PIRES SILENCED ANFIELD

Robert Pires was a man of deft grace – so imagine the shock when he netted one of the most unstoppable rockets any Arsenal man had ever struck at Anfield in 2003, during the Gunners' unbeaten season. With the ball played back to the Frenchman, he took two touches to take it out of his feet before whipping it, like a bullet, into the top corner of the net. The Reds were in shock, slain by a bolt from the (yellow and) blue.



ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
284
GOALS
84

Main Image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

WILLIAM SALIBA

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
134

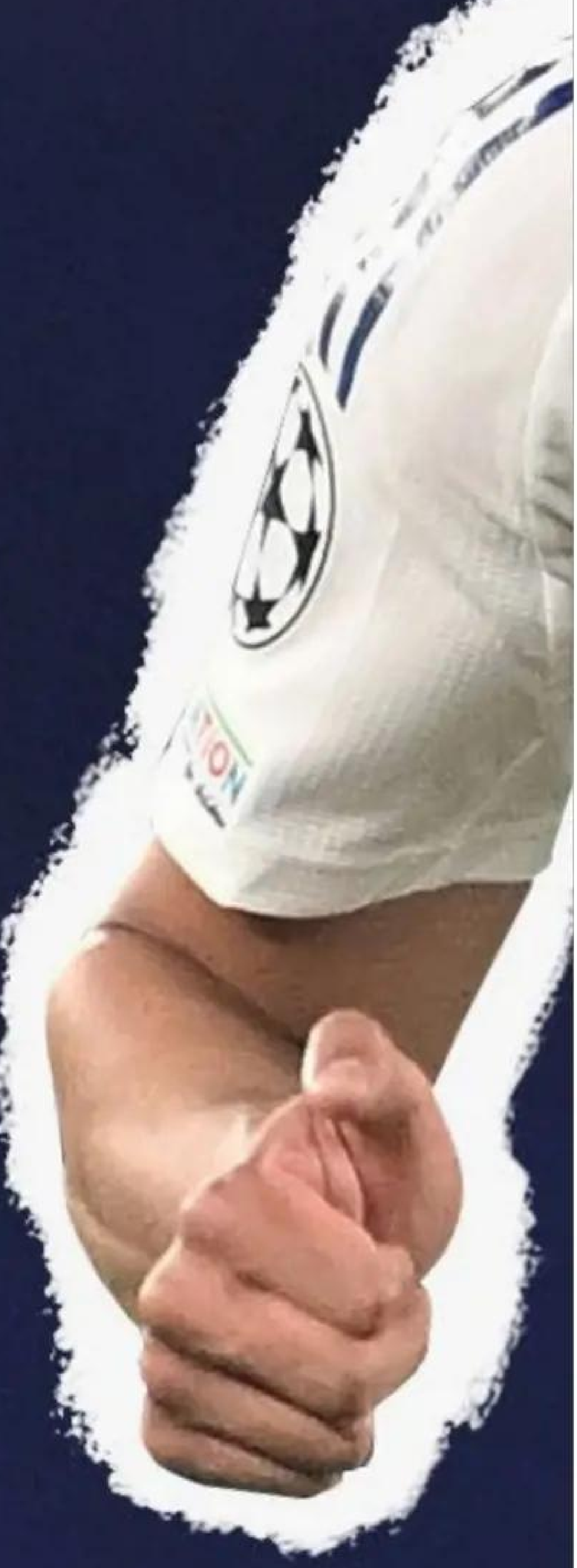
GOALS
7

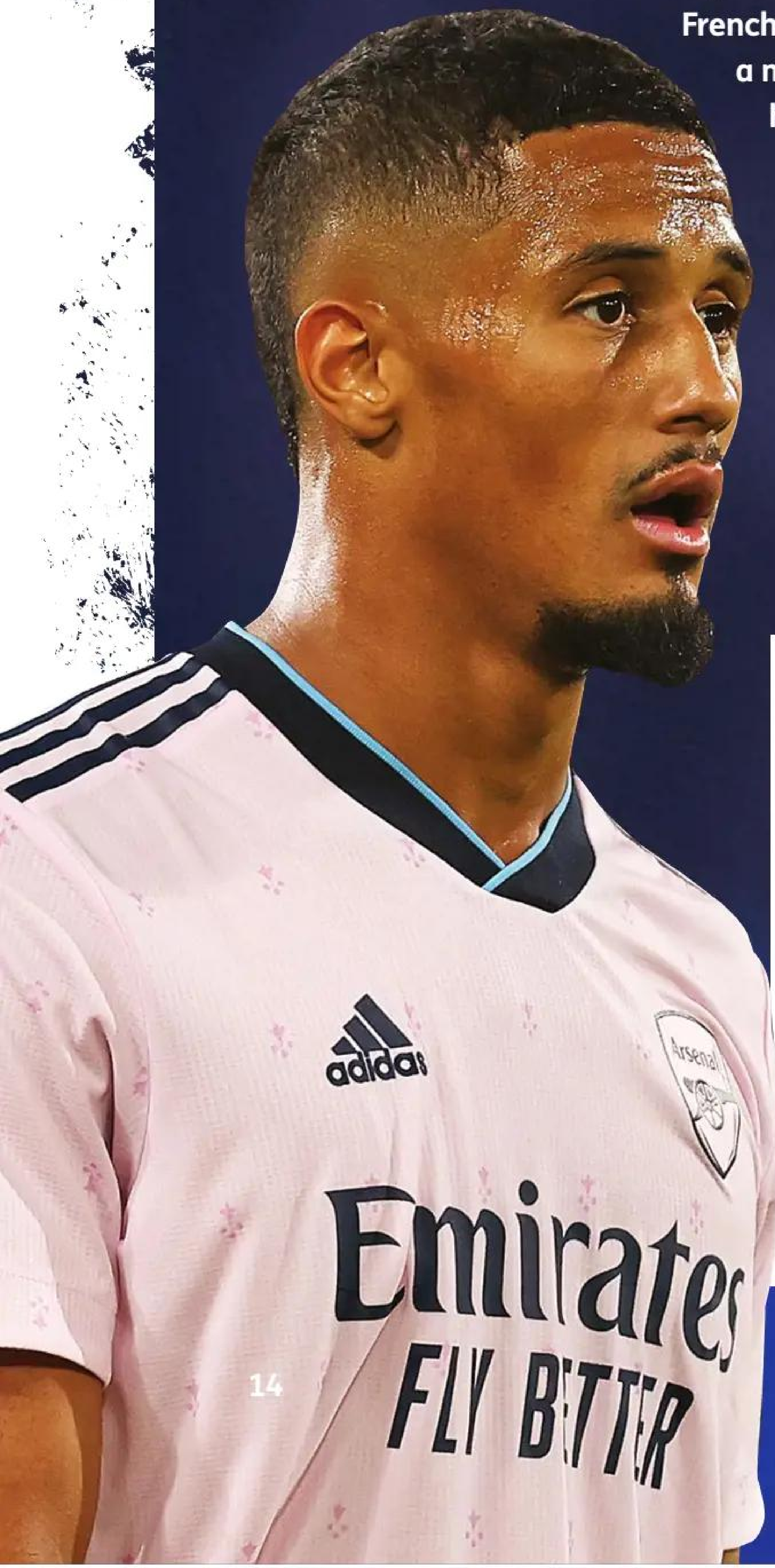
A colossus in Arsenal's backline, Saliba has become the heir to many a Gunners legend with his dominant defensive displays

Two weeks after William Saliba's Arsenal debut, Bournemouth's Vitality Stadium was alive with the sound of Arsenal fans serenading their new hero to the Champs' 'Tequila' – the title replaced by the defender's surname, of course.

From precocious beginnings, the Frenchman has developed into a man-mountain – but he had to wait for his chance. After signing under Unai Emery in 2019, Saliba went back on loan to Saint-Étienne, and was re-integrated a year later – only for new boss Mikel Arteta to change his mind and send the youngster back to France on loan with Nice. A third loan followed, with even Arteta worried over whether Saliba would ever come back. "I was concerned," he admitted. "We didn't think he was ready, [but] how was that going to affect our relationship?"

Yet Saliba rose to the challenge. It speaks of his character that he went on to become a vital player for Arteta – and for those fans who still sing his name.





SIGN OF THINGS TO COME

In his Premier League debut, Saliba picked up the Man of the Match award against Crystal Palace and was labelled "virtually faultless" by the BBC. The French youngster was dropped into centre-back with Gabriel alongside him, as the pair started what would become an excellent partnership, with Saliba the standout man for his composure in defending.

> "FROM PRECOCIOUS BEGINNINGS, THE FRENCHMAN HAS DEVELOPED INTO A MAN-MOUNTAIN"

WILLIAM SALIBA

DID YOU KNOW? SALIBA WENT TO THE SAME PRIMARY SCHOOL AS INTERNATIONAL TEAM-MATE KYLIAN MBAPPÉ.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **24 MARCH 2001**
BIRTHPLACE: **BONDY, FRANCE**
NATIONALITY: **FRENCH**
HEIGHT: **192CM (6'4")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2019-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **2**

STATS & RECORDS

1,107 DAYS BETWEEN SALIBA SIGNING FOR ARSENAL AND MAKING HIS DEBUT

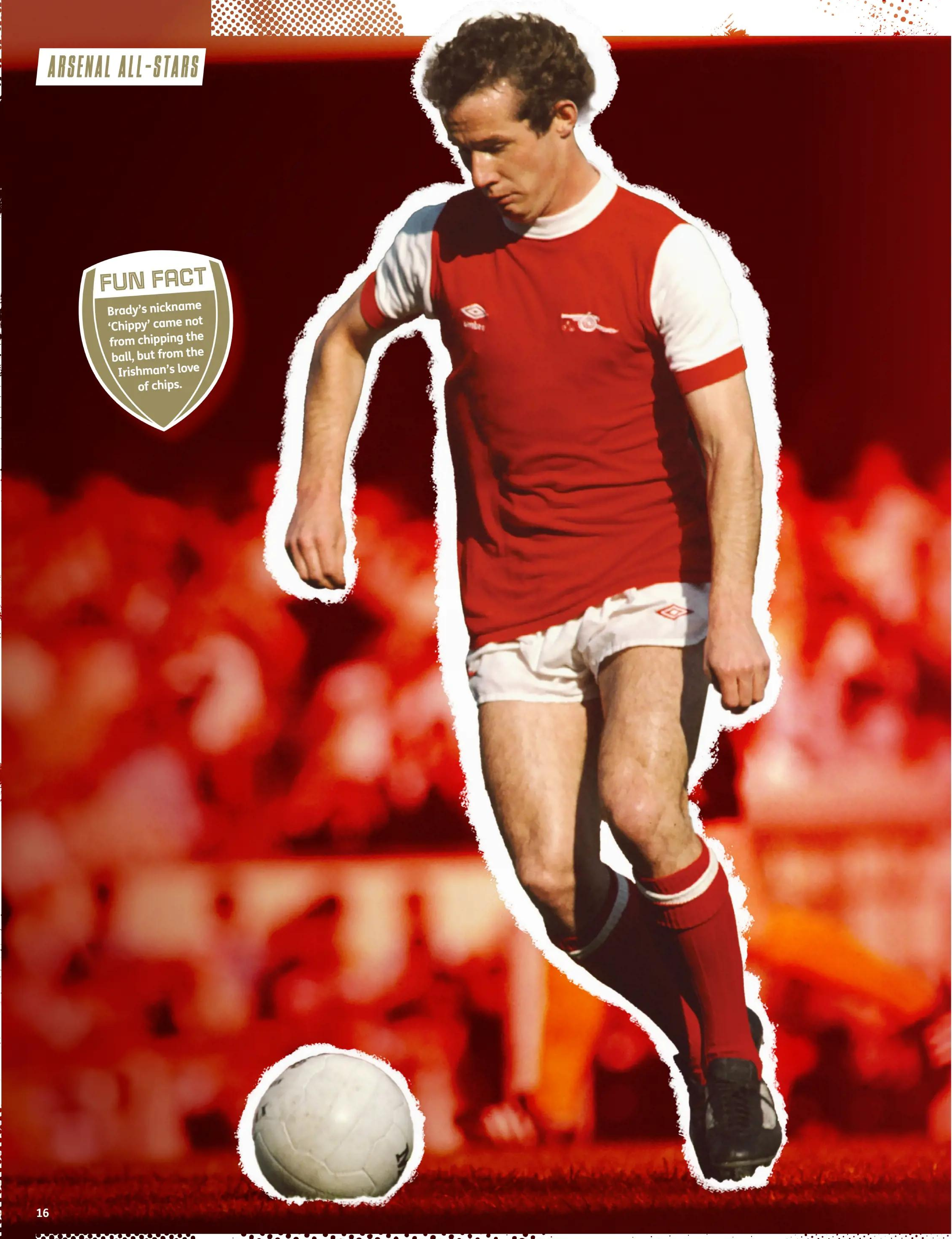
3,420 PL MINUTES PLAYED IN 2023-24: THE FIRST ARSENAL PLAYER TO PLAY EVERY MINUTE OF THE SEASON IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE ERA

3 PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

FUN FACT

Saliba won Arsenal's Goal of the Month award in his first month playing for the club.

Main Image David Price / Getty **Boxout** Julian Finney / Getty



FUN FACT

Brady's nickname 'Chippy' came not from chipping the ball, but from the Irishman's love of chips.

DID YOU KNOW? BRADY WAS ARSENAL'S ACADEMY DIRECTOR FROM 1996 TO 2014, HELPING BRING YOUNGSTERS THROUGH THE RANKS.

LIAM BRADY

A hero of the North Bank throughout the 1970s, Liam Brady would write legends with his dancing feet

Plenty assume that it was Arsène Wenger who ushered in the style and flair that Arsenal would become known for in the 1990s. Clearly, they never saw Liam Brady in his pomp.

The Irishman arrived on English shores as a teenager, and while helping to drag Arsenal away from the drop zone, he became one of the most exciting attackers in English football, dazzling defenders with his footwork. He's remembered for his sublime solo moments – a goal against Tottenham in a 5-0 thumping was a highlight for Gooners of the 1970s – but Brady was a real team player, too. He made Arsenal tick, with his performance in the 1979 FA Cup final essential to the club winning the trophy. And it wasn't just Gooners who loved him: that season, he became the first foreign star to win the PFA Players' Player of the Year. He brought Arsenal sophistication from overseas decades before anyone else.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **13 FEBRUARY 1956**
BIRTHPLACE: **DUBLIN, IRELAND**
NATIONALITY: **IRISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1973-80**
NUMBER: **7**

STATS & RECORDS

3 ARSENAL PLAYER OF THE SEASON AWARDS

4 BALLON D'OR NOMINATIONS

3 CONSECUTIVE FA CUP FINAL APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FA CUP

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
307

GOALS
59

UP FOR THE CUP

Much of Brady's time at Arsenal was spent in a middling team as the undisputed superstar leading the charges. A year before the Irishman departed for the glamour of Italy, however, he was to have his time in the sun, starting the move that culminated in Alan Sunderland's 1979 FA Cup-winning goal at Wembley. It was a moment that proved how integral 'Chippy' was to the Gunners and how everything flowed through him.

Main image Hulton Archive / Getty **Boxout** Mirrorpix / Getty

Emirates
FLY BETTER
RESPECT
FOUNDATION
for children

FUN FACT

Ødegaard's dad had to give permission for him to be in the *Football Manager* game, as he was only 15.

DID YOU KNOW? ØDEGAARD SENT ERLING HAALAND PHOTOS OF HIM IN AN ARSENAL SHIRT TO TRY TO CONVINCE HIM TO JOIN THE GUNNERS.

MARTIN ØDEGAARD

After superstar status as a teenager at Real Madrid, Martin Ødegaard has found a home as Arsenal's captain fantastic

Arsenal nearly signed Martin Ødegaard when he was 15. The Norwegian and his father had dinner with Arsène Wenger, with the Arsenal manager describing the future he'd lay out for the teenager in the Gunners' midfield.

After meetings with other clubs, the family chose Real Madrid – but Ødegaard would return to North London in 2021, on loan from Los Blancos. He immediately injected some creativity into Mikel Arteta's side and soon after, signed permanently. After leading this young team with stunning goals and assists from around the penalty area, he was the prime candidate to succeed Alexandre Lacazette as captain.

He leads by example. A cultured midfield orchestrator who knits play, Ødegaard is also the first out the blocks to press: he is as deft as he is dynamic.

Wenger was rarely wrong and he rightly predicted the Norwegian's future. He was always meant for Arsenal and found himself home in N5, the long way around.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **17 DECEMBER 1998**
BIRTHPLACE: **DRAMMEN, NORWAY**
NATIONALITY: **NORWEGIAN**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2021-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **8**

STATS & RECORDS

2	PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS
15	PL GOALS FROM MIDFIELD IN 2022-23
0.4	GOAL CONTRIBUTIONS PER GAME

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
198

GOALS
41

ARSENAL'S CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

In 2022, Arteta named Ødegaard his captain for the upcoming season, replacing Lacazette. The Norwegian was following in Arteta's own footsteps as a No.8 skippering the team – and though he was young to be a captain, he became a leader in midfield for the Gunners. He was voted Arsenal's Player of the Season in his first campaign with the armband.

Main image NurPhoto / Getty **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

NIGEL WINTERBURN

A key part of the famous back four, Nigel Winterburn was a no-nonsense left-back and one of Arsenal's most underrated players

Nigel Winterburn was fondly remembered during the final-ever European tie at Highbury. When a squirrel invaded the pitch against Villarreal in 2006, the critter was christened 'Nutty Nigel', after the Gunners stalwart who'd left six years earlier: that's a unique legacy in N5, all right.

Winterburn was wholly underrated outside of the capital, however. The left-back played just twice for England's senior team but was one of the country's best defenders – he was a key man in multiple title wins – despite flashier players earning plaudits elsewhere.

His squirrel namesake making a Highbury cameo showed exactly the kind of adoration that Arsenal fans had for Winterburn, however. His hard graft, non-stop engine and industrial approach to defensive duties carved him a place in many hearts. He'd wind up opponents, play the offside trap to a tee and show passion when Arsenal won: he was loved for it.

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
584

GOALS
12

WINTERBURN
3
Gunners
PREMIER EVENTS
194
In Partnership with

A BELTER AT THE BRIDGE

Winterburn's strengths lay in his defensive nous and physicality – but the veteran could hit a ball with venom. It's unlikely he ever hit a shot as sweetly as in 1997 for the Gunners against Chelsea, though – picking up the ball in the middle of the pitch, he marched forward unchallenged and walloped it into the top corner from over 30 yards out to score the winner in a 3-2 Gunners victory. It was a strike that Ian Wright would've been proud of.

NIGEL WINTERBURN

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **11 DECEMBER 1963**
BIRTHPLACE: **ARLEY, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **173CM (5'8")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1987-2000**
NUMBER: **3**

STATS & RECORDS

5 ASSISTS IN THE 1997-98 DOUBLE-WINNING SEASON

3,420 EVERY MINUTE PLAYED IN THE 1988-89 SEASON

31 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN ALL COMPETITIONS

MAJOR HONOURS

- 2x FIRST DIVISION
- 1x PREMIER LEAGUE
- 2x FA CUP
- 1x LEAGUE CUP
- 1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

FUN FACT

Winterburn assisted Alan Smith's opener in the 1989 title decider at Anfield.

DID YOU KNOW? WINTERBURN COMPETED WITH GRAEME LE SAUX AND STUART PEARCE FOR ENGLAND, EARNING JUST TWO CAPS.

Main image Mark Leech/Offside / Getty **Boxout** Matthew Ashton / Alamy

TOP 10 MANAGERS

Pioneers have been welcomed through Arsenal's Marble Halls over the years, making the club what it is today

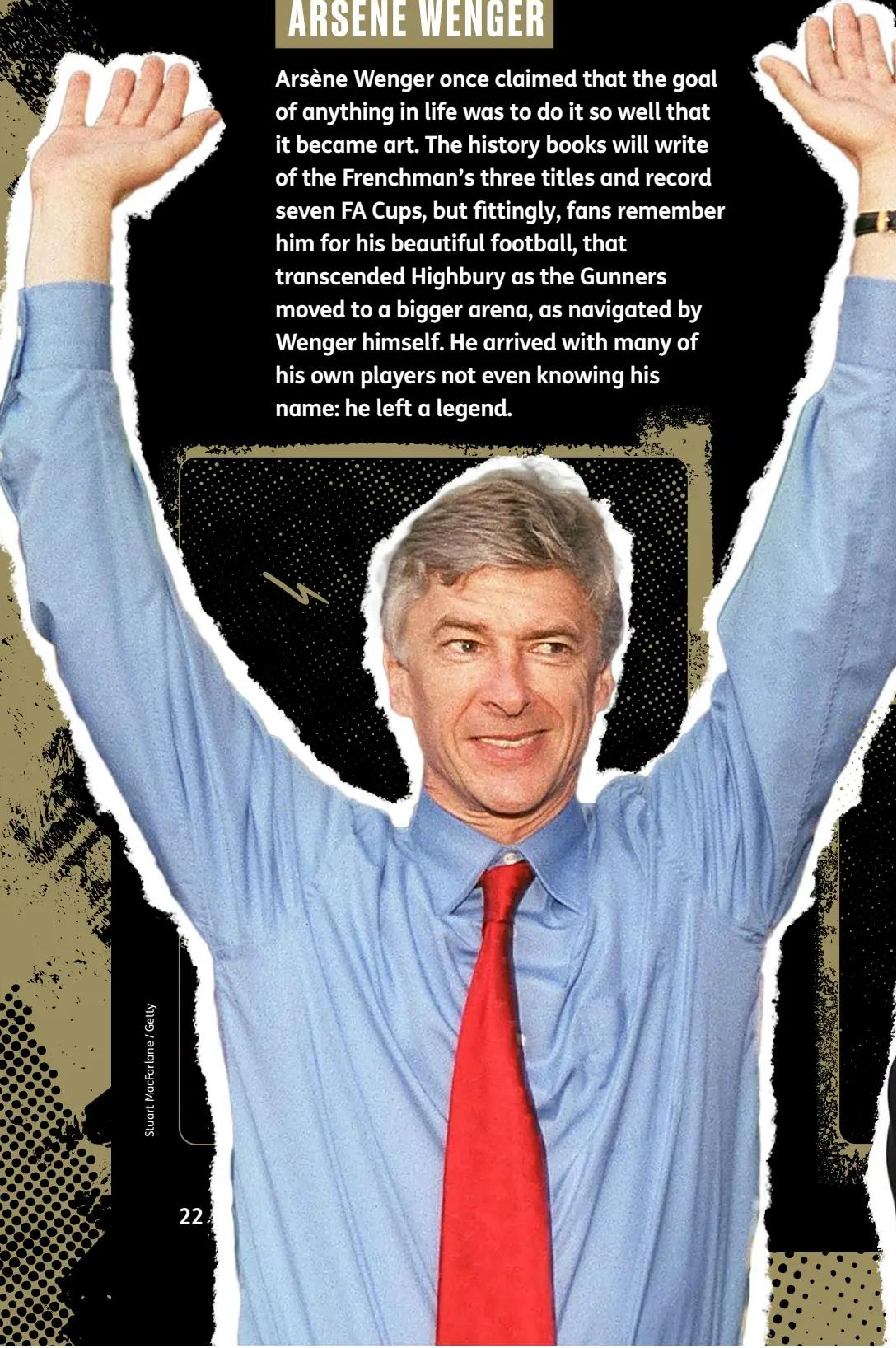
Daily Herald Archive / Getty

HERBERT CHAPMAN

You name it, Herbert Chapman invented it. The WM formation, numbered shirts, white footballs and floodlights were all his idea – as were Arsenal's Highbury clock, white sleeves and tube station name change. But Chapman was far more than a pioneer: he was a winner, too. The Yorkshireman delivered Arsenal's first silverware, winning two league titles and an FA Cup before his untimely death at 55. He's cast in bronze in a statue outside the Emirates Stadium.

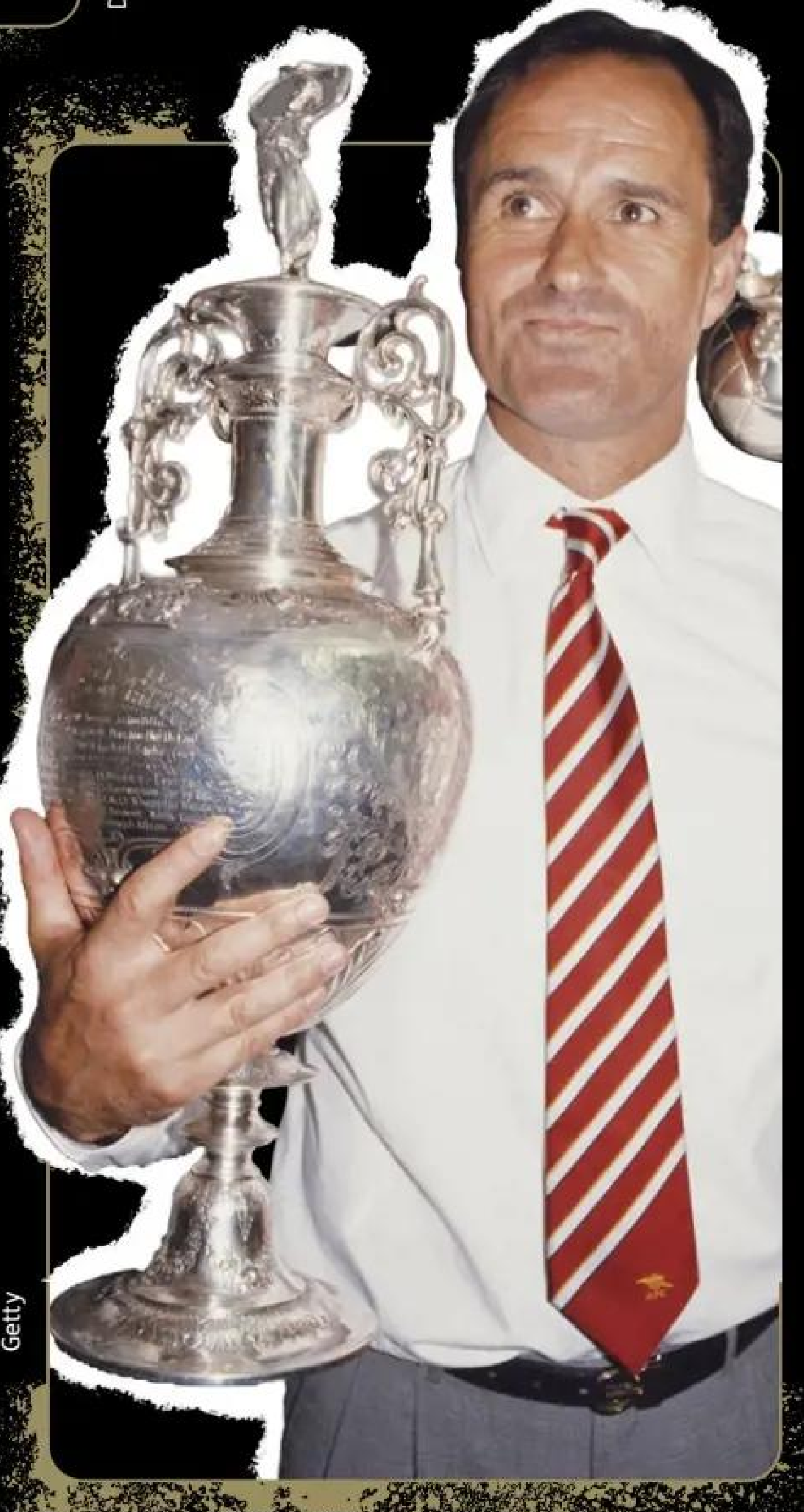
ARSÈNE WENGER

Arsène Wenger once claimed that the goal of anything in life was to do it so well that it became art. The history books will write of the Frenchman's three titles and record seven FA Cups, but fittingly, fans remember him for his beautiful football, that transcended Highbury as the Gunners moved to a bigger arena, as navigated by Wenger himself. He arrived with many of his own players not even knowing his name: he left a legend.


Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

GEORGE GRAHAM

As a player, George Graham was a born winner, a key member of the 1971 Double winners and beloved by Gooners for his heart. As a manager, the Scot brought a no-nonsense, regimented style to Highbury to deliver silverware through pure discipline, transforming the club and heralding its most successful era in over half a century. Graham delivered two titles in three years, three domestic trophies and a European accolade – not bad considering that he was the second-choice to compatriot, Alex Ferguson...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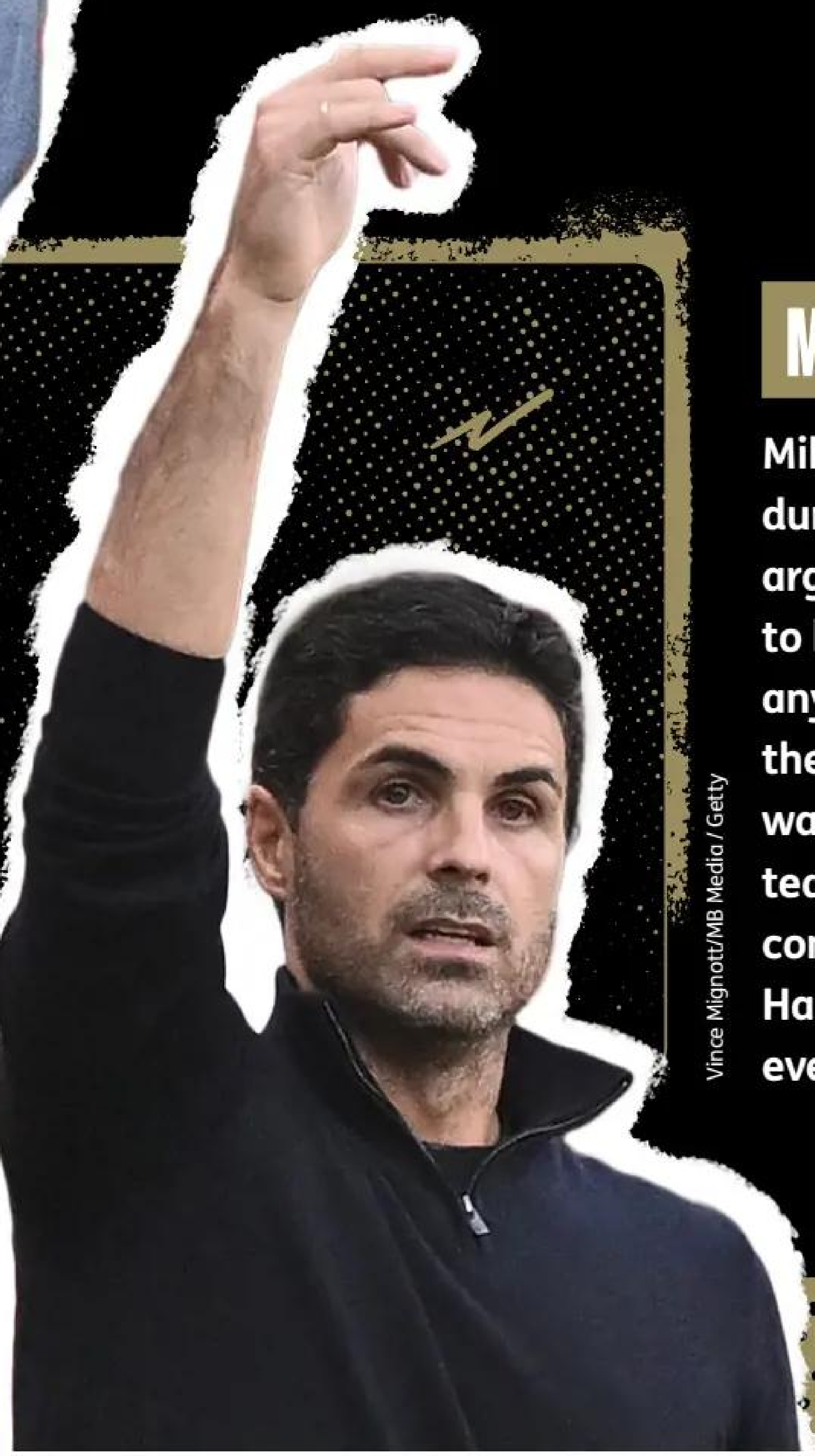

Vince Mignott/MB Media / Getty

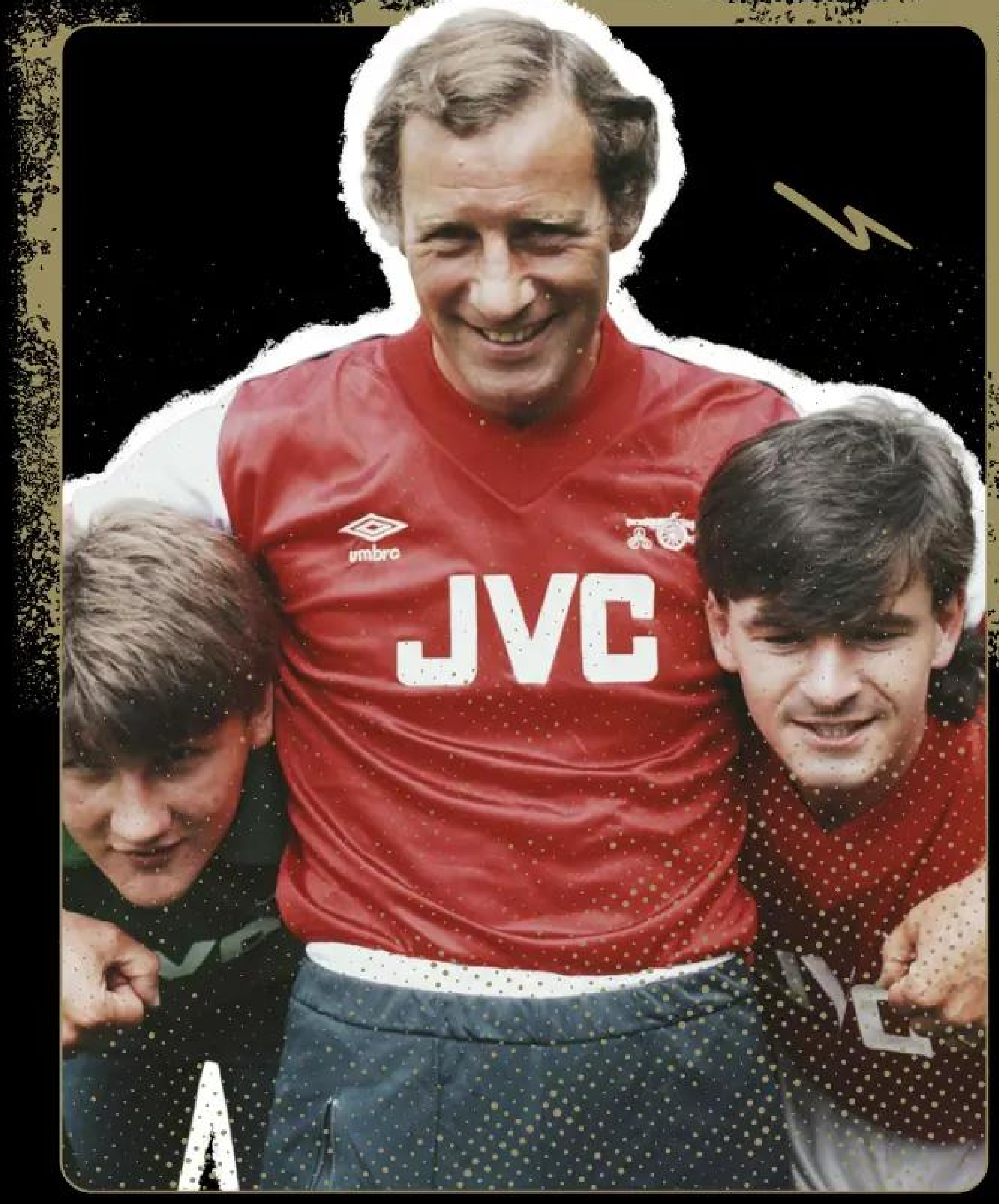
MIKEL ARTETA

Mikel Arteta's first trophy at Arsenal came during lockdown. It was ironic – because arguably the Basque's biggest achievement was to bring the noise back to Arsenal. Few managers anywhere are as tactically astute as Arteta, but the former Arsenal captain's greatest strength was getting Gooners more engaged with their team than they'd been in years. Now, Arsenal are competing at the top table – with hard graft and Hale Enders – and the Emirates is louder than it's ever been.

Mirrorpix / Getty

BERTIE MEE

No one was more surprised than Bertie Mee when Arsenal offered him the managerial job: he was a physiotherapist, who asked for a clause in his contract to return to that role, should he fail. He should have had more faith: Mee led the Gunners to successive cup finals before a Fairs Cup and first-ever league-and-cup Double in 1971, with Dave Sexton and Don Howe as his assistants advising tactically. He left the club with 241 wins under his belt.



Getty

TERRY NEILL

Few dare to make the unthinkable move down the Seven Sisters Road: Terry Neill did it twice. A former Arsenal player, Neill returned from Spurs at the age of just 34 to manage the Gunners: then tried to sign Diego Maradona and Glenn Hoddle. While these near-misses characterised his tenure – Arsenal lost the 1980 Cup Winners' Cup final on penalties and came close to a title in 1981 – the 1979 FA Cup win remains Neill's crowning glory.

TOM WHITTAKER

Through multiple roles over 37 years, Tom Whittaker was Arsenal through and through. Joining the club as a player after World War I, he retired prematurely through injury and instead joined the coaching staff, remaining at Highbury as a trainer under two managers before assuming the managerial reins himself after World War II. When his time came, Whittaker won two titles and an FA Cup: his contribution was unequalled for half a century.

Chris Ware / Getty

VIC AKERS

With 32 trophies across three decades, Vic Akers is Arsenal's most successful manager across any team. Akers became head of Arsenal's community section in 1986: a year later, he founded the women's team, leading them to every major trophy in women's football, including 11 league titles. The North Londoner laid the foundations for what would become a European powerhouse in women's football and is regarded as a great of the Gunners, serving Arsène Wenger as a kit manager, too.

ARSENAL
FINAL

David Price / Getty

Kurt Hutton / Getty

GEORGE ALLISON

Replacing Herbert Chapman was, quite simply, the impossible job. When George Allison stepped into the breach after Chapman's tragic passing in 1934, however, he sought not to follow in the same footsteps: he left the hands-on aspects to Joe Shaw and Tom Whittaker, instead bearing the front of expectations from the media and fans. It worked, too: Arsenal lifted two more titles under his stewardship and an FA Cup, before war broke out in 1939.

Richard Sellers/Allstar / Getty

BRUCE RIOCH

Bruce Rioch is maligned as the unpopular one-season fit between eras: the filling in the sandwich between George Graham and Arsène Wenger. But while he never clicked with fans – and even some of the players – Rioch should be regarded as the man who steadied the ship, signed Dennis Bergkamp and finished fifth in his sole season, leaving a much better picture for Wenger. Great managers are forged in fire: it's the privilege of others to light the flame.

THIERRY HENRY

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
377
GOALS
228

In just eight years, Thierry Henry didn't just become the King of Highbury – he changed English football for good

In 1999, Juventus winger Thierry Henry arrived at Arsenal, after Arsène Wenger explained to him on a flight that he felt his future was destined to be elsewhere on the pitch.

Perhaps not even Wenger realised quite the devastation that he was about to unleash on the Premier League: Henry would win four Premier League Golden Boots, with countless defenders from John Terry to Jamie Carragher later claiming that he was the one striker who kept them up at night.

But far more than just the pure output, Henry was an entertainer. You simply couldn't keep your eyes off the Frenchman in flow state, and he was capable of magic, from twisting and volleying over Fabien Barthez in 2000, to his sumptuous solo goal against Tottenham in 2002.

Never had power been so elegant; never had goals been so artful. He is still the Premier League's greatest star.

MAY I ASSIST YOU?

As well as being one of the most clinical finishers in world football, Henry assisted 20 goals in the 2002-03 Premier League season. He was beaten to the Golden Boot that season by Ruud van Nistelrooy but his assist record still stands today, with only Kevin De Bruyne having equalled it. Henry also won four Premier League Golden Boots, a record until Mohamed Salah matched it in 2025.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **17 AUGUST 1977**
BIRTHPLACE: **PARIS, FRANCE**
NATIONALITY: **FRENCH**
HEIGHT: **188CM (6'2")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **1999-2007, 2012**
NUMBER: **14**

STATS & RECORDS

7 CONSECUTIVE SEASONS AS ARSENAL'S LEADING SCORER

2ND JOINT-HIGHEST FINISH OF ANY ARSENAL PLAYER IN BALLON D'OR

30 JOINT-MOST GOALS FOR AN ARSENAL PLAYER IN A PREMIER LEAGUE SEASON

MAJOR HONOURS

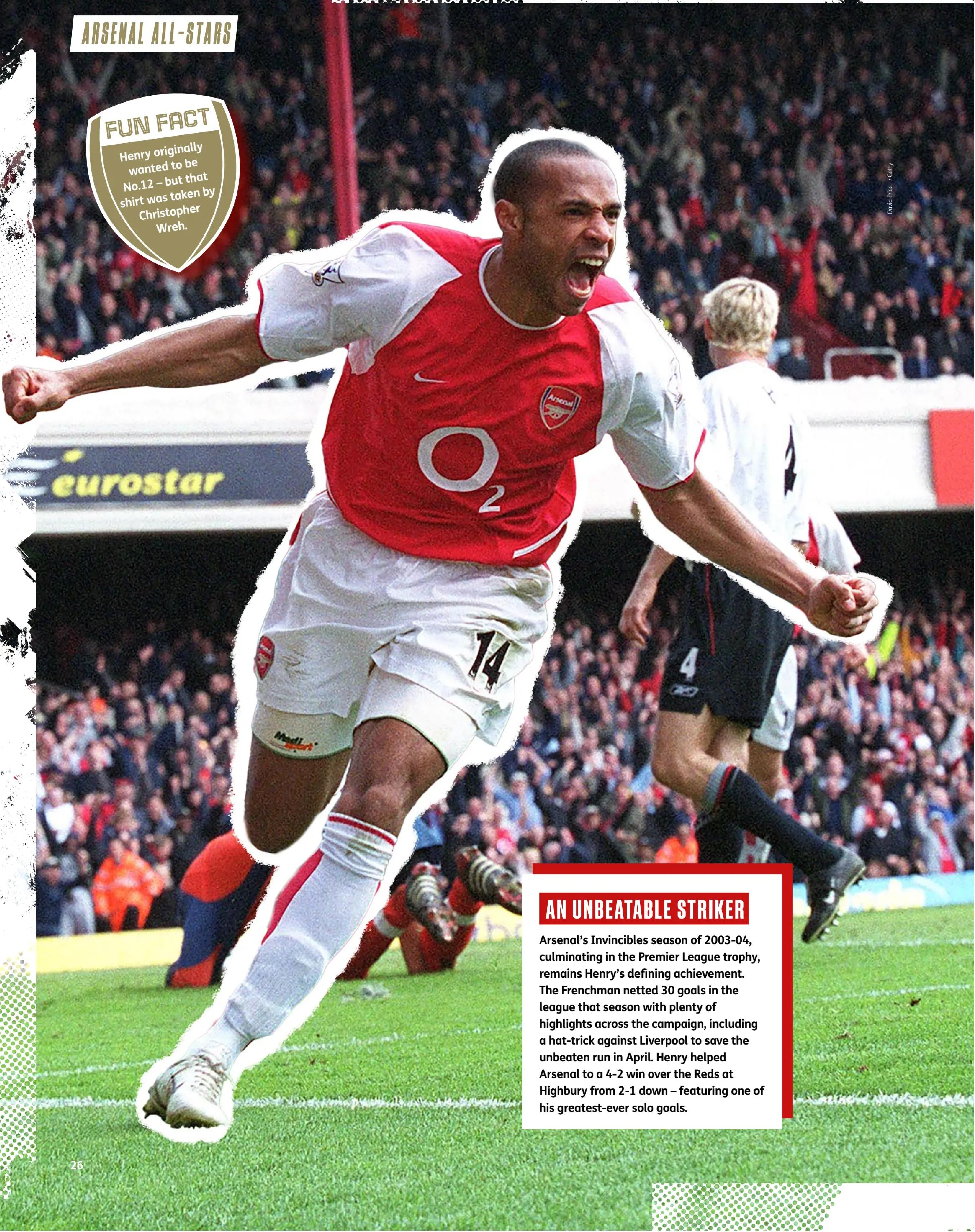
2x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Gary M. Prior / Getty

FUN FACT

Henry originally wanted to be No.12 – but that shirt was taken by Christopher Wreh.

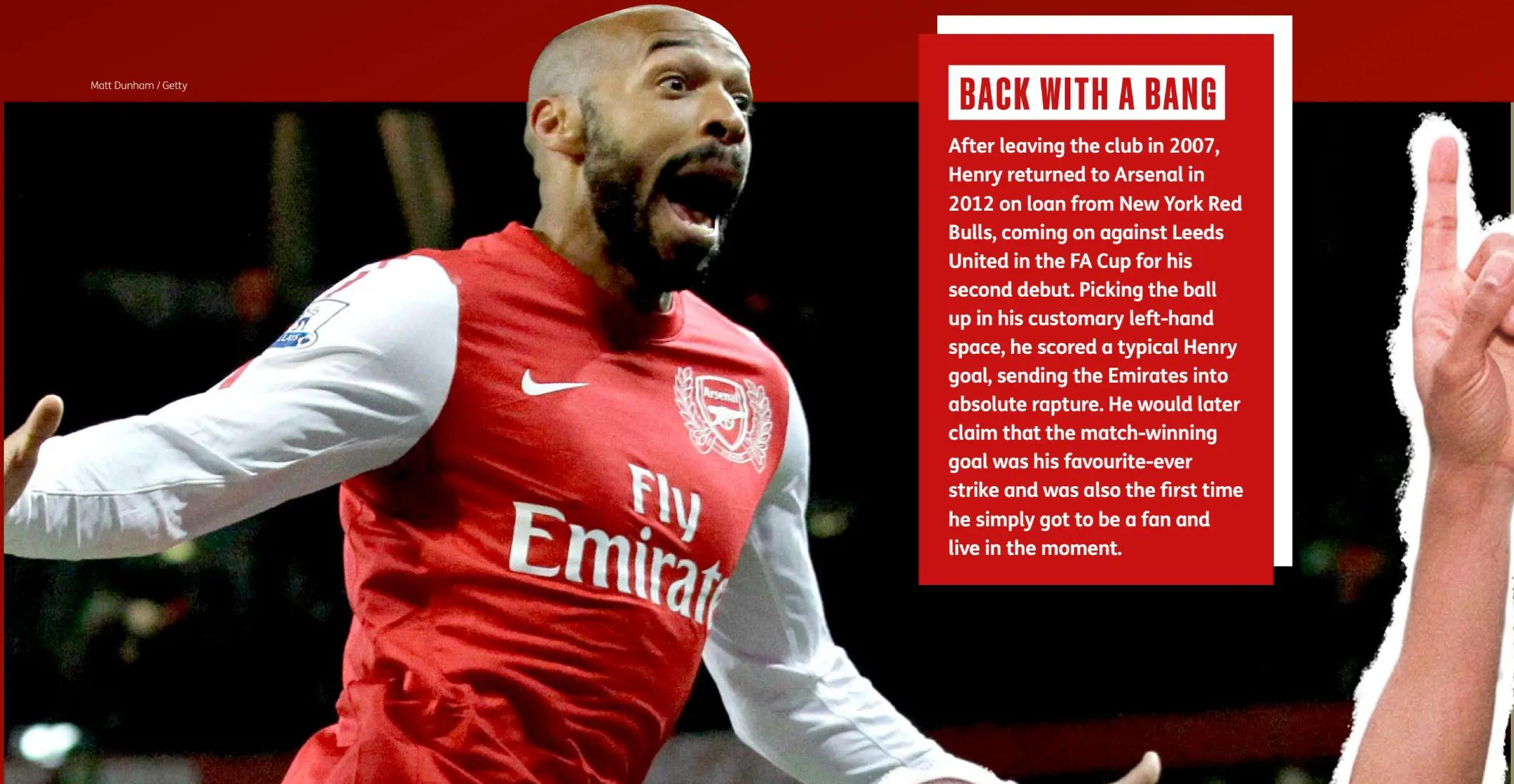


David Price / Getty

AN UNBEATABLE STRIKER

Arsenal's Invincibles season of 2003-04, culminating in the Premier League trophy, remains Henry's defining achievement. The Frenchman netted 30 goals in the league that season with plenty of highlights across the campaign, including a hat-trick against Liverpool to save the unbeaten run in April. Henry helped Arsenal to a 4-2 win over the Reds at Highbury from 2-1 down – featuring one of his greatest-ever solo goals.

DID YOU KNOW? HENRY CLAIMS DENNIS BERGKAMP WAS HIS GREATEST TEAM-MATE, DESPITE PLAYING WITH ZINEDINE ZIDANE AND LIONEL MESSI.



Matt Dunham / Getty

BACK WITH A BANG

After leaving the club in 2007, Henry returned to Arsenal in 2012 on loan from New York Red Bulls, coming on against Leeds United in the FA Cup for his second debut. Picking the ball up in his customary left-hand space, he scored a typical Henry goal, sending the Emirates into absolute rapture. He would later claim that the match-winning goal was his favourite-ever strike and was also the first time he simply got to be a fan and live in the moment.

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

> “THE 2005-06 SEASON WAS YET ANOTHER CAMPAIGN OF BRILLIANCE FROM HENRY”

THE KING OF HIGHBURY

The 2005-06 season was Arsenal’s last at Highbury – and was yet another campaign of brilliance from Henry. He scored an unforgettable winner against Real Madrid at the Bernabéu in the Champions League, broke the Gunners’ all-time scoring record and helped Arsenal into the top four with a hat-trick on the final day of the season. It was a fitting way to say goodbye to Highbury, with Gooners clad in red and white.

RAY PARLOUR

A character that the Arsenal fans saw themselves in, the Romford Pelé reached incredible heights in an Arsenal shirt

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES 466

GOALS 32

At times, there was a case that Ray Parlour was an unsung hero at Arsenal – especially after the influx of fancy playmakers, vying for a place in Arsène Wenger's midfield.

'The Romford Pelé', as he'd become known, made his debut under George Graham and became a reliable squad player able to slot in across the midfield. He could do everything to a high level, but it was his stamina and work-rate that made him a firm favourite – curious, really, considering his laid-back demeanour off the pitch.

Parlour would win Man of the Match at Old Trafford to seal the title in 2002, score in an FA Cup final days later and captain Arsenal to a 5-1 win over Inter Milan in the San Siro. He'd leave after 12 years as an Invincible – and unsung no more. Parlour is regarded as a cult hero and lauded for his roles in some of the Gunners' greatest sides.

"IT'S ONLY RAY PARLOUR"

Soccer AM commentator and Chelsea fan Tim Lovejoy had to eat his words in 2002 after not taking Parlour seriously, as he picked up the ball in the midfield against Chelsea in the FA Cup final. The Romford Pelé let fly from 30 yards out to hammer the ball into the top corner and win the cup for the Gunners – less than a week after he'd helped tie up the league title at Old Trafford with an absolutely magnificent performance.

Dreamcast
2002
15

FUN FACT

Parlour briefly came out of retirement in 2012 to play for Wembley FC.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **7 MARCH 1973**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1992-2004**
NUMBER: **15**

STATS & RECORDS

29 ASSISTS FOR ARSENAL IN ALL COMPETITIONS

333 MOST PREMIER LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

2 HAT-TRICKS FOR ARSENAL FROM MIDFIELD

MAJOR HONOURS

3x PREMIER LEAGUE

4x FA CUP

1x LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

DID YOU KNOW? PARLOUR WORKED WITH TWO ENGLAND MANAGERS AT MIDDLESBROUGH: STEVE MCCLAREN AND GARETH SOUTHGATE.

Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

Emirates
FLY BETTER
VISIT RWANDA

FUN FACT

Lewis-Skelly was eligible to represent both England and Barbados at international level.

DID YOU KNOW? LEWIS-SKELLY'S MOTHER, MARCIA, SET UP A SERVICE TO SUPPORT FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN IN ACADEMY FOOTBALL.

MYLES LEWIS-SKELLY

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
39

GOALS
1

A Hale End hero of many talents, Myles Lewis-Skelly encapsulates everything great about Mikel Arteta's Arsenal

Myles Lewis-Skelly is highly intelligent, technically brilliant, and battles on the pitch like he's been playing for a decade. Although he wasn't even born when Arsenal went 49 games unbeaten, it's fitting that he wears the number on his shirt, since he epitomises the traits that Gooners hold dear. His introduction into the first team was unforgettable, getting booked before he'd even come onto the pitch to hold onto a point against Manchester City, only for him to score his first goal against them months later in the return fixture. He's since put in defining performances against the likes of Real Madrid and Tottenham.

However, while Lewis-Skelly likes to get stuck in, he's far more than just a 'passion merchant', able to pass the ball with precision and impossible to knock out of possession. At just 19, the world is at his feet already. He belongs at the top.

BIO

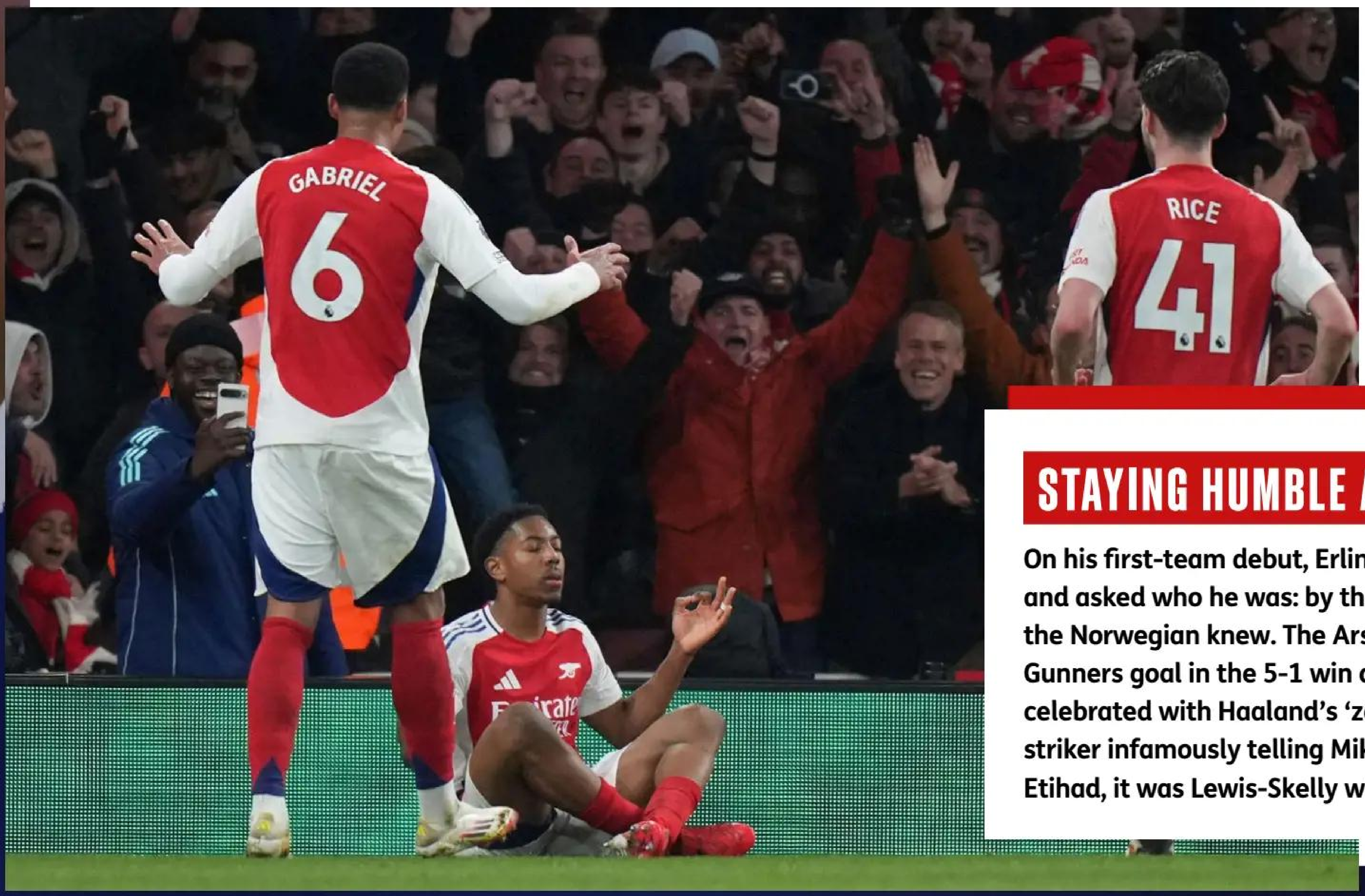
DATE OF BIRTH: **26 SEPTEMBER 2006**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2024-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **49**

STATS & RECORDS

23 PL APPEARANCES IN HIS FIRST SEASON

20 MINUTES BEFORE SCORING ON HIS SENIOR ENGLAND DEBUT

94% PASS COMPLETION IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE IN 2024-25



STAYING HUMBLE AT HOME

On his first-team debut, Erling Haaland huffed at Lewis-Skelly and asked who he was: by the time the two teams met again, the Norwegian knew. The Arsenal youngster bagged his first Gunners goal in the 5-1 win against the champions, then celebrated with Haaland's 'zen' pose. With the Manchester City striker infamously telling Mikel Arteta to stay humble at the Etihad, it was Lewis-Skelly who had the last laugh.

Main image News Images / Alamy **Boxout** Alastair Grant / Alamy

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
564

CLEAN SHEETS
239

FUN FACT

Arsenal goalkeeping coach Bob Wilson was Seaman's best man at his wedding.

DID YOU KNOW? SEAMAN APPEARED IN THE ENGLAND SIDE FOR 15 CONSECUTIVE YEARS, A RECORD AT THE TIME.

DAVID SEAMAN

'Safe Hands' was more than a brick wall between the sticks, becoming a household name and a byword for brilliance

Signing David Seaman was a gamble for George Graham. The QPR stopper was bought for a British record £1.3m for a goalkeeper, replacing the hugely popular John Lukic between the sticks.

At the end of the 1990-91 season, however, Graham's decision had been vindicated with just 18 goals conceded all campaign, in which Seaman played every minute. He was to become a legend for club and country.

Developing his game as a penalty-saving specialist, Seaman became the perfect last line of defence behind Arsenal's iconic backline, and with former Double winner Bob Wilson as his goalkeeping coach, the England No.1 repeated his mentor's feat by scooping Doubles of his own in 1998 and 2002.

A year later, in his final season, he would captain the Gunners to one last FA Cup and sign off with a unique save in the semi-final against Sheffield United. The signing fee was well worth it.

BLUNTING THE BLADES

Seaman's save in the 2003 FA Cup semi-final against Sheffield United remains a career highlight, and what many have described as the greatest stop of all time. Paul Peschisolido's header from six yards out would have wrong-footed anyone, forcing Seaman to change direction at the last second – yet miraculously, the England keeper clawed the ball away to keep the score at 1-0. It's a save that defied physics and cemented Seaman's legacy.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **19 SEPTEMBER 1963**
BIRTHPLACE: **ROTHERHAM, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **193CM (6'4")**
POSITION: **GOALKEEPER**
YEARS: **1990-2003**
NUMBER: **1**

STATS & RECORDS

23 CLEAN SHEETS DURING THE 1990-91 FIRST DIVISION LEAGUE SEASON

141 PREMIER LEAGUE CLEAN SHEETS, THE FIFTH-MOST OF ANY GOALKEEPER

325 THE MOST PL APPEARANCES OF ANY ARSENAL GOALKEEPER

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FIRST DIVISION

2x PREMIER LEAGUE

4x FA CUP

1x LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

Main image Ben Radford / Getty **Boxout** Laurence Griffiths / Getty

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **2 MAY 1967**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1985-92**
NUMBER: **7**

STATS & RECORDS

18 YEARS, 4 MONTHS, AND 26 DAYS OLD
AGE WHEN ROCASTLE MADE HIS ARSENAL DEBUT

38 JOINT-MOST LEAGUE APPEARANCES WHEN ARSENAL WON THE 1988-89 TITLE

2 PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

MAJOR HONOURS

2x FIRST DIVISION

1x LEAGUE CUP

FUN FACT

Rocastle was originally rejected by Millwall before signing for Arsenal.

***DID YOU KNOW?* ROCASTLE NEVER LOST WHILE PLAYING FOR ENGLAND, WINNING SEVEN AND DRAWING SEVEN.**

DAVID ROCASTLE

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
277

GOALS
34

Rocky's name is still sung by the Arsenal faithful today, in tribute to a man whose legacy will last forever

Few young footballers have got fans off of their seats like David Rocastle. The midfielder had an undeniable combination of style and steel – and soon enough, he made his name in George Graham's side.

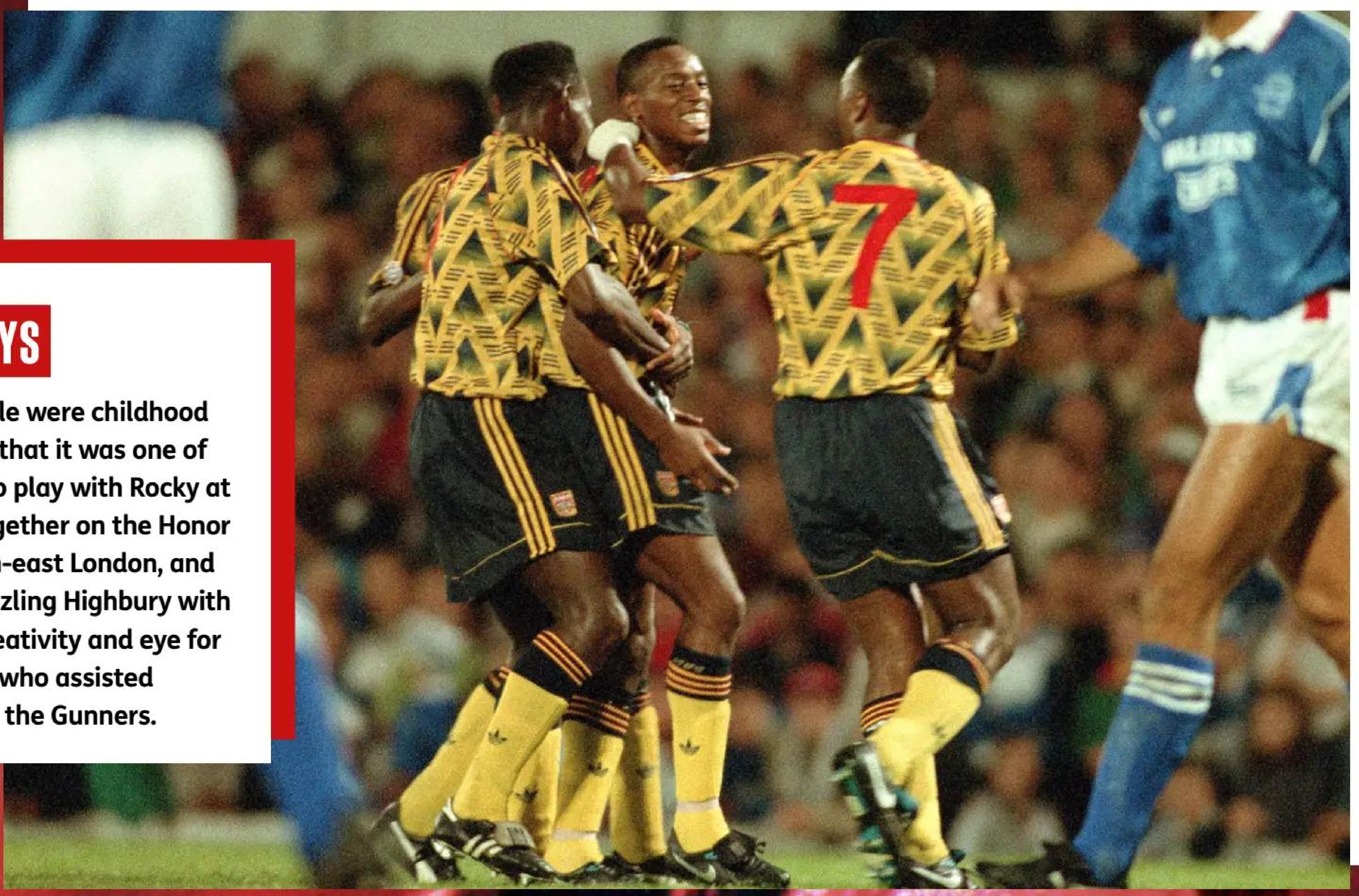
As a key member of the Gunners' side in the 80s, Rocastle was selfless, strong and assured. A future boss in Arsène Wenger would later talk of Rocastle as a "modern player of exceptional dimension". How he'd have loved to have him.

Rocastle was controversially sold by Graham in 1993, though. The Arsenal team never looked the same again under the Scot.

Tragically, the playmaker passed away from cancer in 2001, aged just 33. Over 20 years after his death, Rocky's name still rings out among Arsenal fans, in chants both from those who watched him and those who have merely heard the stories. His impact on Arsenal will never be forgotten, and his name will remain eternal at the Emirates.

THE BROCKLEY BOYS

Ian Wright and David Rocastle were childhood friends, with Wrighty saying that it was one of the highlights of his career to play with Rocky at Arsenal. The pair grew up together on the Honor Oak estate in Brockley, south-east London, and spent a season together, dazzling Highbury with their combined ingenuity, creativity and eye for goal. Fittingly, it was Wright who assisted Rocastle's final-ever goal for the Gunners.



Main image Phil O'Brien / Alamy **Boxout** Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

FUN FACT

Zubimendi and Mikel Arteta both played for Antiguoko, a youth side based in San Sebastián.

***DID YOU KNOW?* ZUBIMENDI PLAYED WITH BOTH MIKEL MERINO AND MARTIN ØDEGAARD AT REAL SOCIEDAD.**

MARTÍN ZUBIMENDI

Arsenal's new midfield conductor was coveted by the footballing elite, and arrives in N5 to deliver silverware

England fans drew a sigh of relief at half-time of the Euro 2024 final, seeing that Manchester City superstar Rodri was being taken off by Spain. They shouldn't have relaxed so soon.

The first that many English eyes saw of Martín Zubimendi was the substitute controlling the game with the effortlessness of a veteran: now they have the privilege of watching him every week. Those who had watched Real Sociedad for years could have told you that this was the norm, though. The Basque burst into La Real's senior side as an old head on teenage shoulders, becoming Sociedad's metronome in no time at all and leading the club to the Champions League.

The appeal of Zubimendi was obvious for Mikel Arteta: he complements Declan Rice, while adding a leader's mentality to midfield. The 26-year-old player may well be one of San Sebastián's best midfielders since… well, Arteta himself.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **2 FEBRUARY 1999**
BIRTHPLACE: **SAN SEBASTIÁN, SPAIN**
NATIONALITY: **SPANISH**
HEIGHT: **181CM (5'11")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2025-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **36**

STATS & RECORDS

236 APPEARANCES FOR REAL SOCIEDAD

4 FINALS WITH SPAIN, INCLUDING THE OLYMPICS, EUROS AND NATIONS LEAGUE

17TH SPANISH PLAYER TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE FOR ARSENAL

SECURING THE FUTURE OF MIDFIELD

With Arsenal losing Jorginho and Thomas Partey in 2025, Arteta needed to bring in a world-class replacement. Zubimendi was tracked by Liverpool in 2024 but turned them down, before being linked with Real Madrid, Manchester City and Barcelona – but he decided to reject all of them for Arsenal, where he could link up with fellow Basque, Arteta. The move was lauded in the football world as a fantastic coup and demonstrated the strength of Arsenal's pull.

Arsenal
Emirates
VISIT RWANDA

Main image Sportimage / Alamy **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

FUN FACT

Overmars became the most expensive Dutchman ever after joining Barcelona from Arsenal in 2000.

DID YOU KNOW? OVERMARS GREW UP ON A FARM WITH NO TRACTOR – AND HAD TO PICK POTATOES BY HAND.

MARC OVERMARS

Flying Dutchman Marc Overmars was a catalyst for Arsène Wenger's first Double and helped revolutionise the Premier League

When discussing the imports of overseas talents to English football in the 1990s, Marc Overmars is perhaps unfairly overlooked as one of the most important players when it came to changing the sport on these shores.

While Arsène Wenger brought a new intensity to the Premier League by improving diet and training methods, opposition defenders weren't ready for Overmars, who could terrorise defenders with his directness. He was two-footed, able to play on either flank and would have no problem cutting inside to fool a full-back: he became the blueprint for the likes of Robert Pires and Freddie Ljungberg in future seasons and changed the way that wide players were seen in England.

He was a vital part of Arsenal's Double-winning team in 1998, but Overmars only spent three years in North London before Barcelona came calling. Fittingly for a searingly pacy winger, he burned bright and delivered moments that still haunt opponents almost 30 years later.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **29 MARCH 1973**
BIRTHPLACE: **EMST, NETHERLANDS**
NATIONALITY: **DUTCH**
HEIGHT: **173CM (5'8")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1997-2000**
NUMBER: **11**

STATS & RECORDS

4 GAMES PER PREMIER LEAGUE GOAL

22 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN ARSENAL'S 1997-98 DOUBLE-WINNING CAMPAIGN

33 ASSISTS FOR ARSENAL IN ALL COMPETITIONS

MAJOR HONOURS

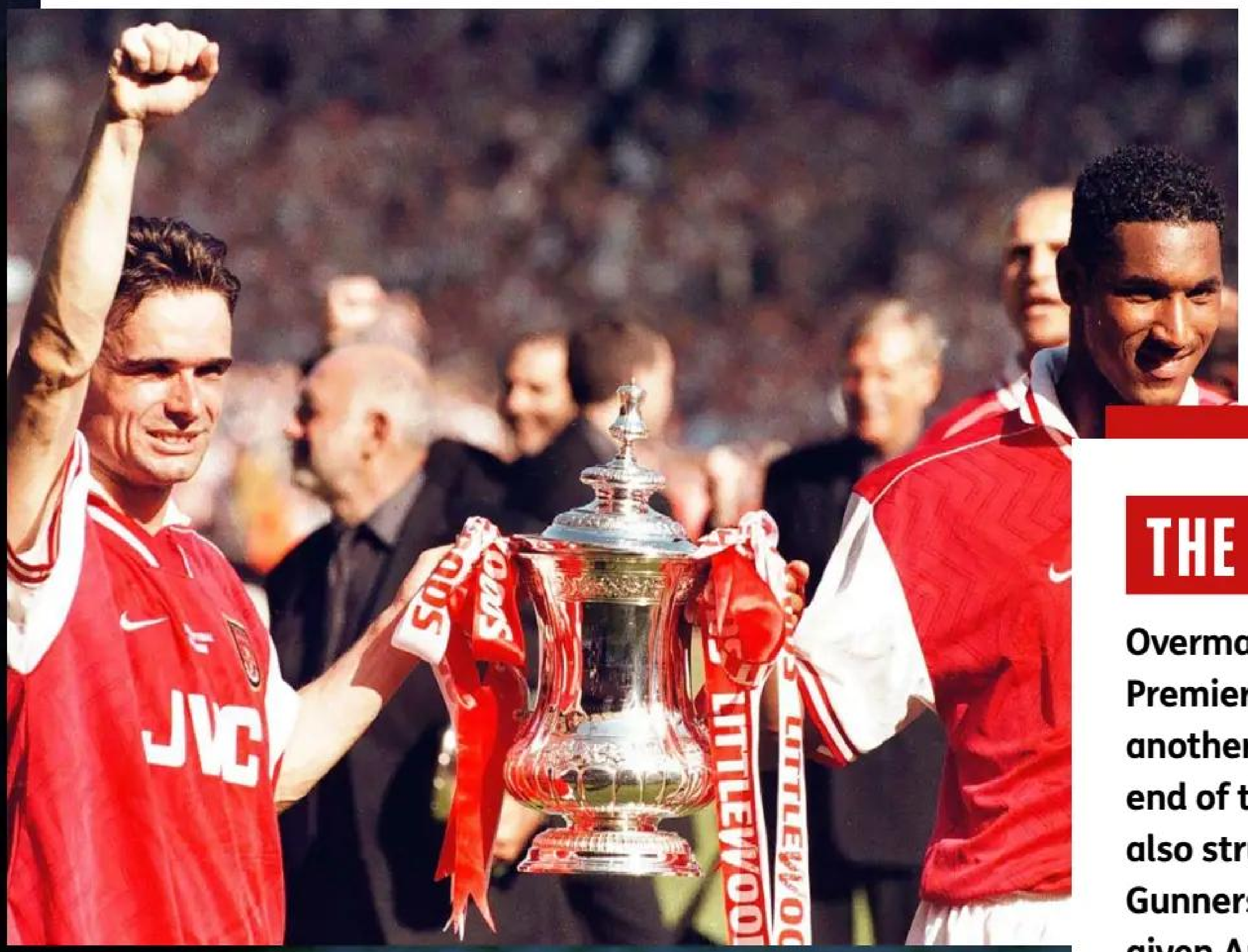
1x PREMIER LEAGUE

1x FA CUP

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
142

GOALS
41



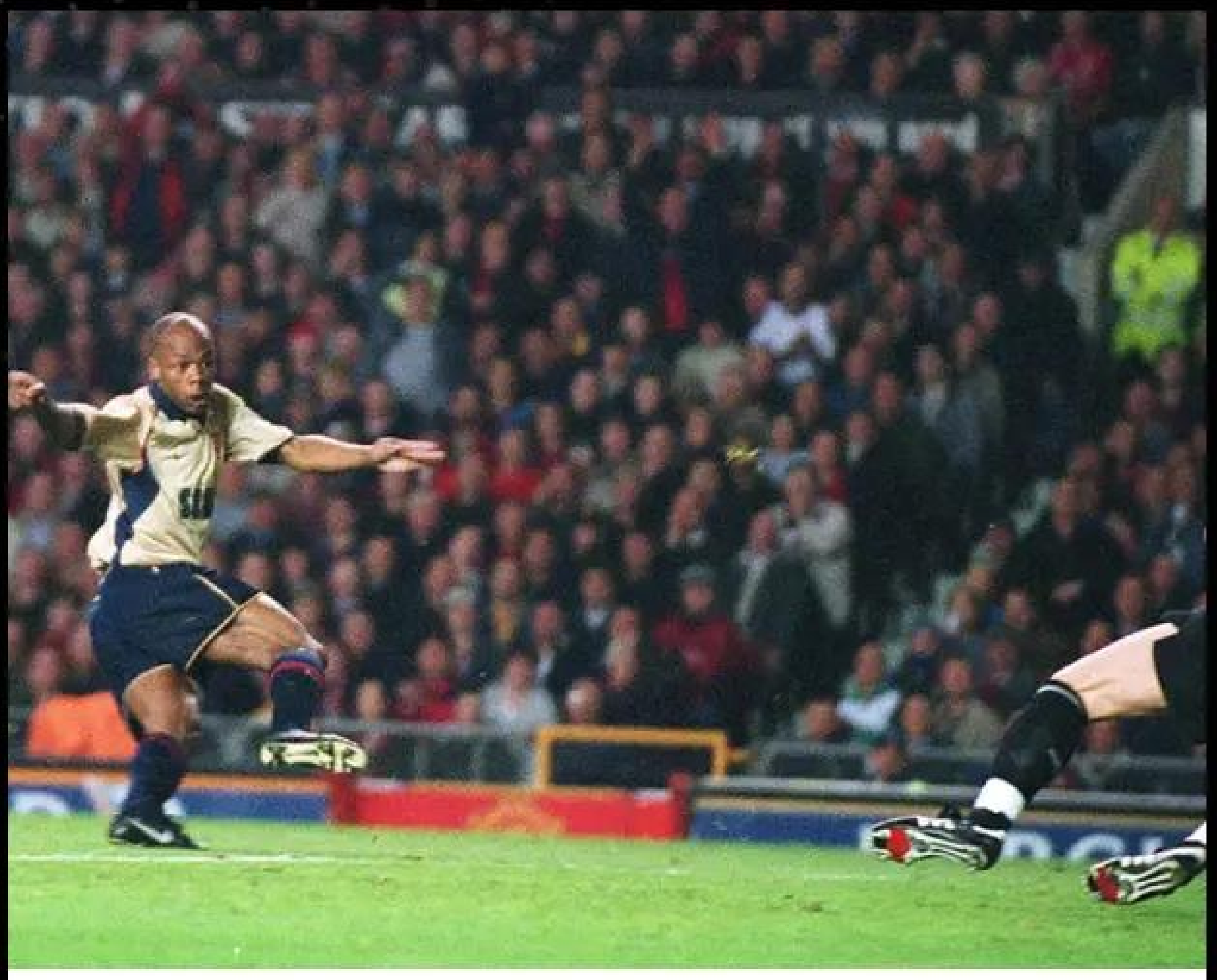
THE DEADLY DUTCHMAN

Overmars got six goals and assists before Christmas in his first Premier League season – but became integral to the run-in, with another ten goal contributions in all competitions during the business end of the season. His first in the 1998 FA Cup final was vital, but he also struck against Manchester United in the league to set the Gunners on the way to the title. The trophy was even more impressive, given Arsenal came from nine points behind to overhaul United.

Main image Shaun Botterill / Getty **Boxout** Alastair Grant / Alamy

TOP 10 MOMENTS

Every Gooner has a pantheon of magic memories – these are the few that define the club's history



Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

MANCHESTER UNITED 0
ARSENAL 1

8 May 2002

Fate had drawn together English football's two biggest rivals, Messrs Ferguson and Wenger, for the climax of the 2001-02 season. This was to be the sweetest of any league encounter between the two, as Arsenal – minus Thierry Henry, Robert Pires and Dennis Bergkamp – beat Manchester United in their back garden to lift the title. One-half of the Double was completed that night, with Sylvain Wiltord scoring the only goal, writing his name into Gunners folklore.

Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

LIVERPOOL 0
ARSENAL 2

26 May 1989

Going to Anfield and winning the title by a clear two goals was impossible, surely? The odds lengthened for the Gunners with every second that ticked away, until Michael Thomas charged through the midfield to end 18 years of hurt. David Dein told of watching the game through his fingers, before turning to chairman Peter Hill-Wood after Thomas's iconic goal. "Never in doubt," Hill-Wood uttered, lowering his cigar. A Hollywood ending if ever there was one.

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR 2
ARSENAL 2

25 April 2004

In winning the title at White Hart Lane in 2004, Arsenal were told not to celebrate and antagonise their hosts. Thierry Henry simply couldn't resist. The Gunners cruised to a draw in the end that afternoon, but Henry led the charge at full-time, celebrating another title with the corner of the travelling support. Some were old enough to remember the last time Arsenal won the league at Tottenham.

ODD ANDERSEN / Getty

David Cannon / Getty

ARSENAL 1
PARMA 0

4 May 1994

Even with no Ian Wright, Arsenal became the fourth London club to win the Cup Winners' Cup through a customary George Graham masterclass. Alan Smith pounced on a chance to net early – and from then on, the classic back four did the rest, soaking up pressure from Faustino Asprilla and Gianfranco Zola to the sound of "one nil to the Arsenal" from the travelling support. It marked Arsenal's first – and so far only – major continental cup win.

Getty

ARSENAL 3
MANCHESTER UNITED 2

12 May 1979

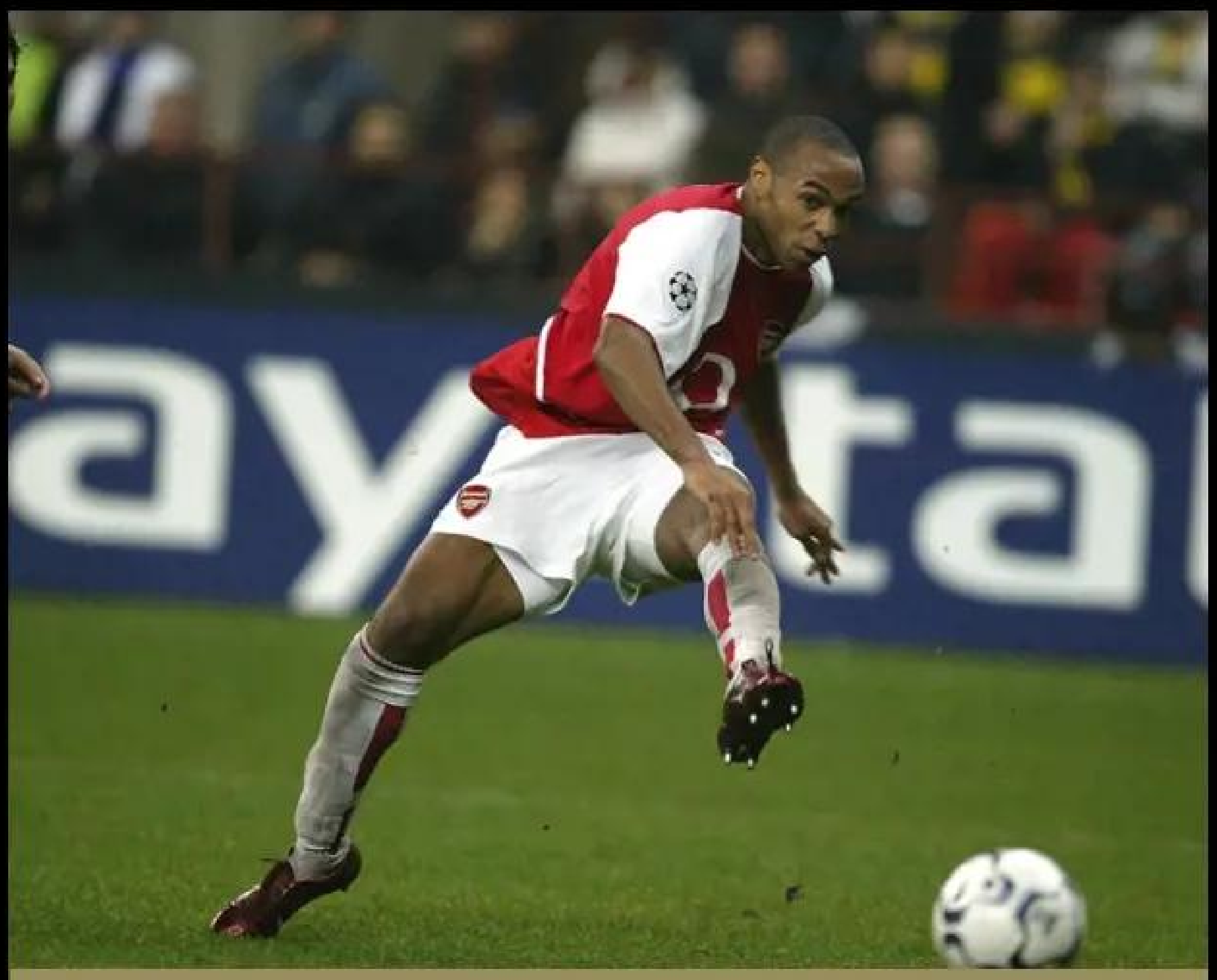
The 1979 Cup final became known as the 'Five-minute Final' for a bonkers crescendo in the closing stages, in which Arsenal looked like surrendering the cup before winning it dramatically. The Gunners were cruising 2-0 before a quick turnaround from Gordon McQueen and Sammy McIlroy: it looked like extra-time was coming – and then Alan Sunderland grabbed the game by the scruff of the neck to keep the FA Cup in the capital. Once again, Arsenal had triumphed in their lucky yellow.

REAL MADRID 0
ARSENAL 1

21 February 2006

No English side had ever won in the Bernabéu – until Thierry Henry and Arsenal visited. With a makeshift defence and uncharacteristically packed midfield, Arsenal had to bide their time like a boxer judging jabs, only for Henry to storm through the pitch in the second half and deliver the knockout punch to the Galácticos. It was the highlight of the Gunners' run to the Champions League final that season – and perhaps the club's greatest moment in the competition ever.

David Price / Getty



Alex Livesey / Getty

INTER MILAN 1
ARSENAL 5

25 November 2003

Arsenal were in danger of exiting the Champions League in the group stage and needed a statement in the San Siro. The game bubbled for a while, but after Inter equalised, Thierry Henry turned the screw in the second half to inspire an unprecedented thrashing. Toying with Javier Zanetti, he netted his second, before Edu and Robert Pires made it 5-1, sending Inter out instead, in what remains one of the most impressive performances of any English side in Europe.

ArsenalMobile.com
4:17 ARSENAL WIGAN
SAMSUNG

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

ARSENAL 4
WIGAN 2

7 May 2006

It actually took Arsenal going behind in their final Highbury fixture to light a fire in Thierry Henry, who scored a hat-trick to ensure a winning end to the famous old ground – and fourth in the league at the expense of Tottenham. After netting his third – and the last goal at Highbury – the captain took to his knees and kissed the turf. This was his playground: he had to be the one to secure one last win there.

ARSENAL 2
LIVERPOOL 1

8 May 1971

Every FA Cup final crowns a hero: and 1971 saw Charlie George's moment in the sunshine, sprawled across the Wembley turf in celebration. The local lad came up with the winning goal in extra-time, capping off a first-ever Double for the Gunners after a marathon campaign in which the Gunners played a whopping 64 fixtures. By the end, they were dead on their feet – but indisputably, the best team in the land.

Peter Robinson / Alamy

Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

ARSENAL 4
EVERTON 0

3 May 1998

The final home game of the season was a cause for celebration at Highbury in 1998, as the Gunners finished Arsène Wenger's first full season in charge with silverware. Arsenal ran rings around Everton in the North London sun, with Tony Adams fittingly putting the finishing touches on the win with the last goal of the campaign. A captain's contribution, all right, with his celebration immortalised in statue form outside the Emirates Stadium.

Images Getty, Alamy

“A HARD-AS-NAILS DEFENDER WHO WILL PUT HIS BODY ON THE LINE FOR THE CLUB”

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
210

GOALS
20

GABRIEL

One of the first signings of the Mikel Arteta era, Arsenal fans have fallen in love with Gabriel

I love this club, I love the supporters, my team-mates, I love this stadium," Gabriel beamed upon signing a new contract in 2025. The feeling from fans is mutual.

Gabriel has become arguably the world's most dangerous player in either box during his time at Arsenal: he puts in last-ditch tackles and he's almost unstoppable when it comes to heading home from corners. Gooners have come to love the passion with which he celebrates – whether he's just nodded the winner or put in a last-ditch block. But it's easy to forget the defence wasn't always this solid. In his time at the club, plenty has changed around him – but the Brazilian has been a beacon of consistency.

"His role in the team has grown – and he's improved his mentality," Mikel Arteta said in 2024. Big Gabi is true Arsenal heritage: a hard-as-nails defender who will put his body on the line for the club.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **19 DECEMBER 1997**
BIRTHPLACE: **SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL**
NATIONALITY: **BRAZILIAN**
HEIGHT: **190CM (6'3")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2020-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **6**

STATS & RECORDS

0.1 GOALS PER GAME FROM DEFENCE

2 PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

150TH ARSENAL GAME MARKED WITH A GOAL IN A 6-0 WIN OVER WEST HAM

THE PANTOMIME VILLAIN

Gabriel and Erling Haaland have history. The pair regularly grind each other's gears when they meet, with both players engaging in a fiery dialogue at the end of the Manchester City vs Arsenal game in 2024. Both players scored, with Haaland bouncing the ball on Gabriel's head in a cheeky celebration. Stay tuned for this rivalry to develop in the coming years...

Main image Mark Pain / Alamy **Boxout** Dave Thompson / Alamy

JUST THE TWO OF US

In 2022, William Saliba returned from loan. Though Gabriel had struck up an excellent partnership with Ben White, the new boy displaced White – and it turned out to be a masterstroke. The new couple would form one of the strongest central defensive bonds in the Gunners' history, and have been near impenetrable since, as well as being great friends off the pitch.

Alex Burstow / Getty

CAPTAIN FANTASTIC

In October 2024, Gabriel got his chance to lead Arsenal out for the first time when he was named as skipper in the absence of Martin Ødegaard against Bournemouth. It showed just how far the Brazilian had come, from arriving in London without speaking any English to being a leadership figure in a young team. Unfortunately, his first game as captain would end in defeat following the controversial sending off of his defensive partner Saliba, but Gabriel would lead Arsenal to victory against Wolves in January 2025 in his second game as skipper.

Emirates
FLY BETTER

Sports Press Photo / Alamy

***DID YOU KNOW?* GABRIEL IS A BIG-GAME PLAYER, HAVING SCORED AGAINST TOTTENHAM, CHELSEA, LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER CITY.**

A DEBUT TO REMEMBER

In 2021, Gabriel netted the second goal against Fulham in a 3-0 win, in Arsenal's first game of the season. It was the start of good things to come for Big Gabi and marked the Brazilian's penchant for finding the back of the net. In his first 210 games, he'd net 20 times – almost once every 10 games, which is impressive for a defender.

FUN FACT

Gabriel won Arsenal's Player of the Month award in his first two months in England.

adidas
Emirat
FLY BETTER
VISIT RWANDA

David Price / Getty

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **20 MARCH 1968**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **183CM (6'0")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1985-97**
NUMBERS: **9, 10**

STATS & RECORDS

150 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN ALL COMPETITIONS FOR ARSENAL

100 CONSECUTIVE APPEARANCES AFTER RETURNING TO THE TEAM FOLLOWING PERSONAL PROBLEMS

13 LEAGUE GOALS WHEN ARSENAL WON THE 1990-91 LEAGUE TITLE

MAJOR HONOURS

2x FIRST DIVISION

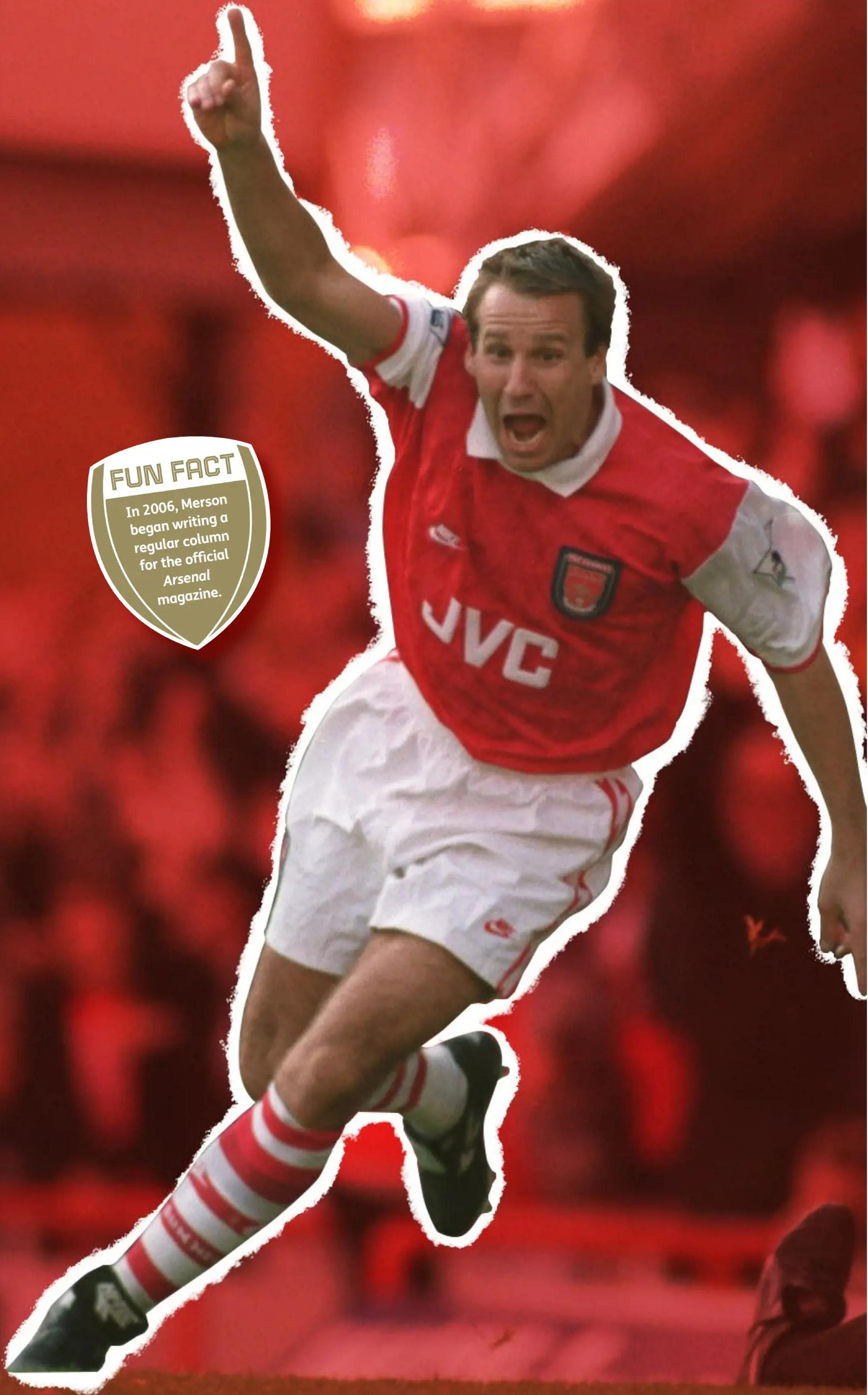
1x FA CUP

1x LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

FUN FACT

In 2006, Merson began writing a regular column for the official *Arsenal* magazine.



DID YOU KNOW? MERSON GREW UP AS A CHELSEA FAN AND REMAINED SO THROUGHOUT HIS PLAYING CAREER.

PAUL MERSON

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
425

GOALS
99

'Magic Man Merse' lit up Highbury as a youngster, becoming one of England's most talented playmakers over a glittering career

When George Graham arrived at Arsenal, he was ruthless in getting rid of the old guard and building a side that was hungry to win, looking to young players that he could mould into his own. As PFA Young Player of the Year in 1989, as Graham's Young Guns took home the title at Anfield in cinematic fashion, there's a definite case that Paul Merson was his crowning glory as a manager.

Merson scored 10 times that season from midfield, then netted another 13 two years later when he won his second title. By the mid-90s, he had established himself as an England regular and one of the most mercurial talents that Highbury had ever produced: after battling addiction, he fought himself into Arsène Wenger's team and played some of the best football of his career.

In 12 years at Arsenal, Merson became a legend: and that he was the perfect player for both Wenger and Graham showed his brilliance.

REBORN UNDER WENGER

Merson was one of George Graham's generals and typified the Scot's view that off-field drinking could be conducive to a happy team on the pitch. While some may have wondered if the midfielder would struggle under Wenger, however, Merson didn't – instead, despite only playing under the Frenchman for a season, the playmaker enjoyed some of the best football of his career. Merson insisted that he loved playing for Wenger even after he left and that the Frenchman helped rekindle magic in him.

Main image Ben Radford / Getty **Boxout** Ben Radford / Getty

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES

118

GOALS

11

Dreamcast
17

***DID YOU KNOW?* PETIT REPORTEDLY WORE THE NO.17 AS HIS BROTHER PASSED AWAY AT THAT AGE.**

EMMANUEL PETIT

One half of one of Arsenal's greatest-ever double acts, Emmanuel Petit added grit and guile to the Gunners

Emmanuel Petit signed for Arsène Wenger for the second time in 1997, having joined Monaco under his compatriot a whole nine years before. He was one of the first wave of continental signings under the new manager, with legend claiming that he had talks at Tottenham first before taking a taxi to Highbury.

But while overseas players of the time were adding elegance to the league, 'Manny Small' was built for English audiences: he was tall, muscular and unafraid to get stuck in. Petit won the Double in his very first season, forming an unforgettable partnership with another Frenchman in Patrick Vieira. Together, the pair would run games, marching from box to box together.

Petit would soon become cherished by the Highbury faithful for his all-action displays, but would only stay three years, departing to Barcelona in 2000.

Petit burned bright in his short time, though, and is still one of the club's greatest-ever midfielders.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **22 SEPTEMBER 1970**
BIRTHPLACE: **DIEPPE, FRANCE**
NATIONALITY: **FRENCH**
HEIGHT: **185CM (6'1")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1997-2000**
NUMBER: **17**

STATS & RECORDS

4 ASSISTS IN JUST FIVE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

11 GOAL CONTRIBUTIONS IN ALL COMPETITIONS IN THE 1997-98 DOUBLE-WINNING SEASON

320 GAMES UNDER ARSÈNE WENGER, AT MONACO, THEN ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

1x PREMIER LEAGUE

1x FA CUP

WHEN ARSENAL WON THE WORLD CUP

In the last minute of the 1998 World Cup final, France's Vieira passed the ball to Arsenal team-mate Petit for him to score the 1,000th goal in the French Football Federation's history – and win the Coupe du Monde for Les Bleus. Naturally, *Daily Mirror* editor and self-proclaimed Gooner Piers Morgan went for the headline, "Arsenal win the World Cup" on the next day's front page: it's a headline that's still framed in the Emirates Stadium media room.

PETIT
17
VIEIRA
4

FUN FACT

Petit is the only Arsenal player to have scored in a World Cup final, netting in 1998.

Images Getty, Laurence Griffiths / Staff

FUN FACT

Martinelli shares a birthday with Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who he replaced at left wing for Arsenal.

DID YOU KNOW? MARTINELLI HAD TRIALS AT BOTH MANCHESTER UNITED AND BARCELONA BEFORE JOINING ARSENAL IN 2019.

GABRIEL MARTINELLI

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
225
GOALS
51

One of the greatest bargains in Arsenal's history, Gabriel Martinelli's goals, guile and graft have made him a key part of Mikel Arteta's side

Little was known about Gabriel Martinelli when the teenager joined Arsenal for just £6 million from the Brazilian lower leagues in 2019. He has gone on to repay that transfer fee many times over.

Martinelli never stops running. It's perfectly encapsulated by his 2020 solo goal against Chelsea in which he ran the length of the pitch – but he shows his engine every week, chipping in with goals and assists, but returning to help his full-back.

In 2022-23, he registered 15 league goals – but for most of the time, the 2020 Olympic gold medallist plays a more selfless role. He hugs the touchline and creates space for others just as much as he gets in the box himself.

Jürgen Klopp once called Martinelli a "talent of the century". It's certainly hard to argue that he hasn't been a spectacular signing for Arsenal – not just in terms of his end product but also the effort he puts into his game.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **18 JUNE 2001**
BIRTHPLACE: **GUARULHOS, BRAZIL**
NATIONALITY: **BRAZILIAN**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **2019-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **11**

STATS & RECORDS

7 MARTINELLI IS ONE OF SEVEN ARSENAL PLAYERS TO HAVE WON OLYMPIC GOLD

18 YEARS, 1 MONTH, AND 24 DAYS OLD
AGE WHEN MARTINELLI MADE HIS ARSENAL DEBUT

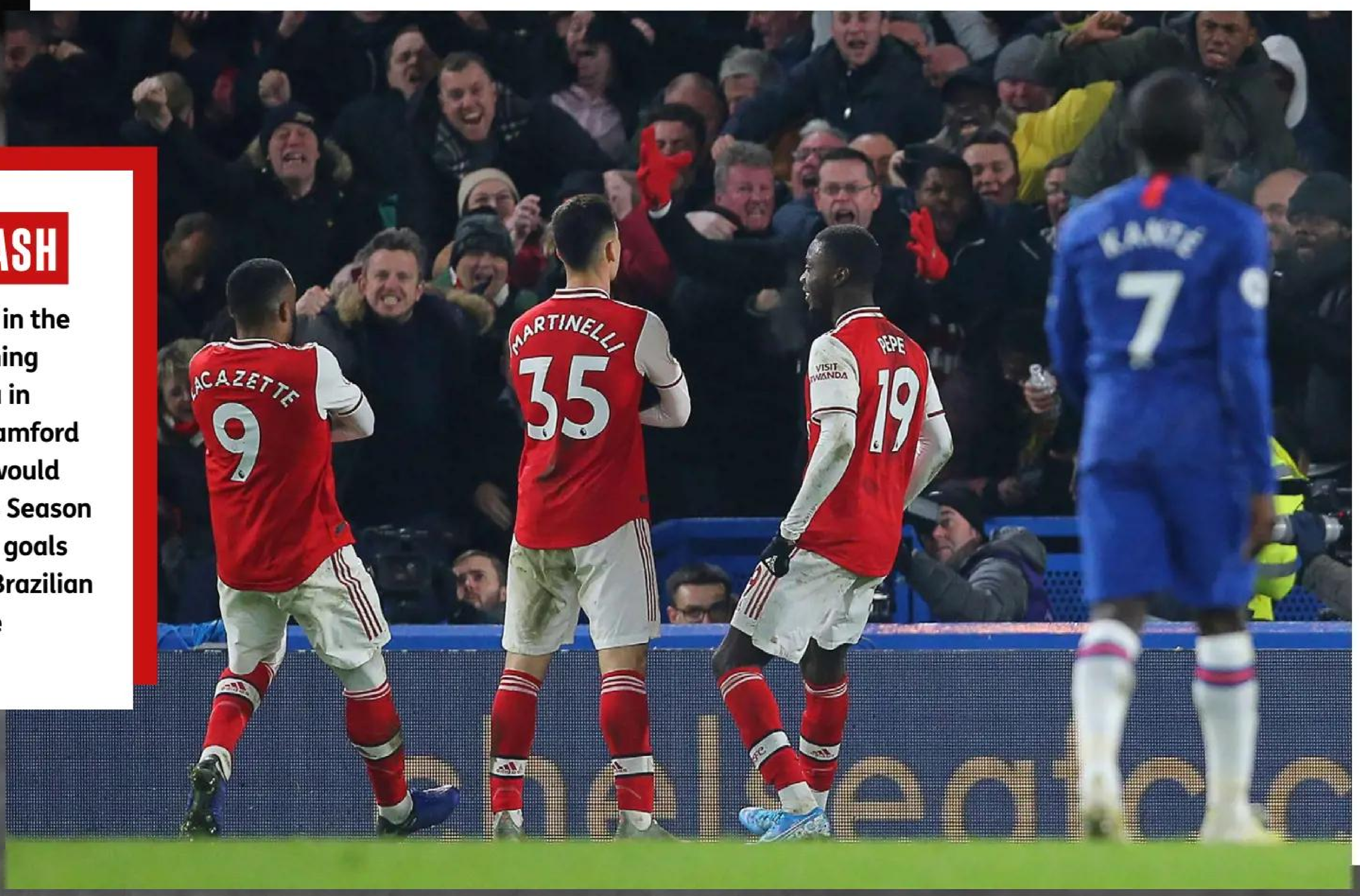
15 GOALS SCORED IN THE 2022-23 SEASON

MAJOR HONOURS

1x
FA CUP

KING OF THE CAPITAL CLASH

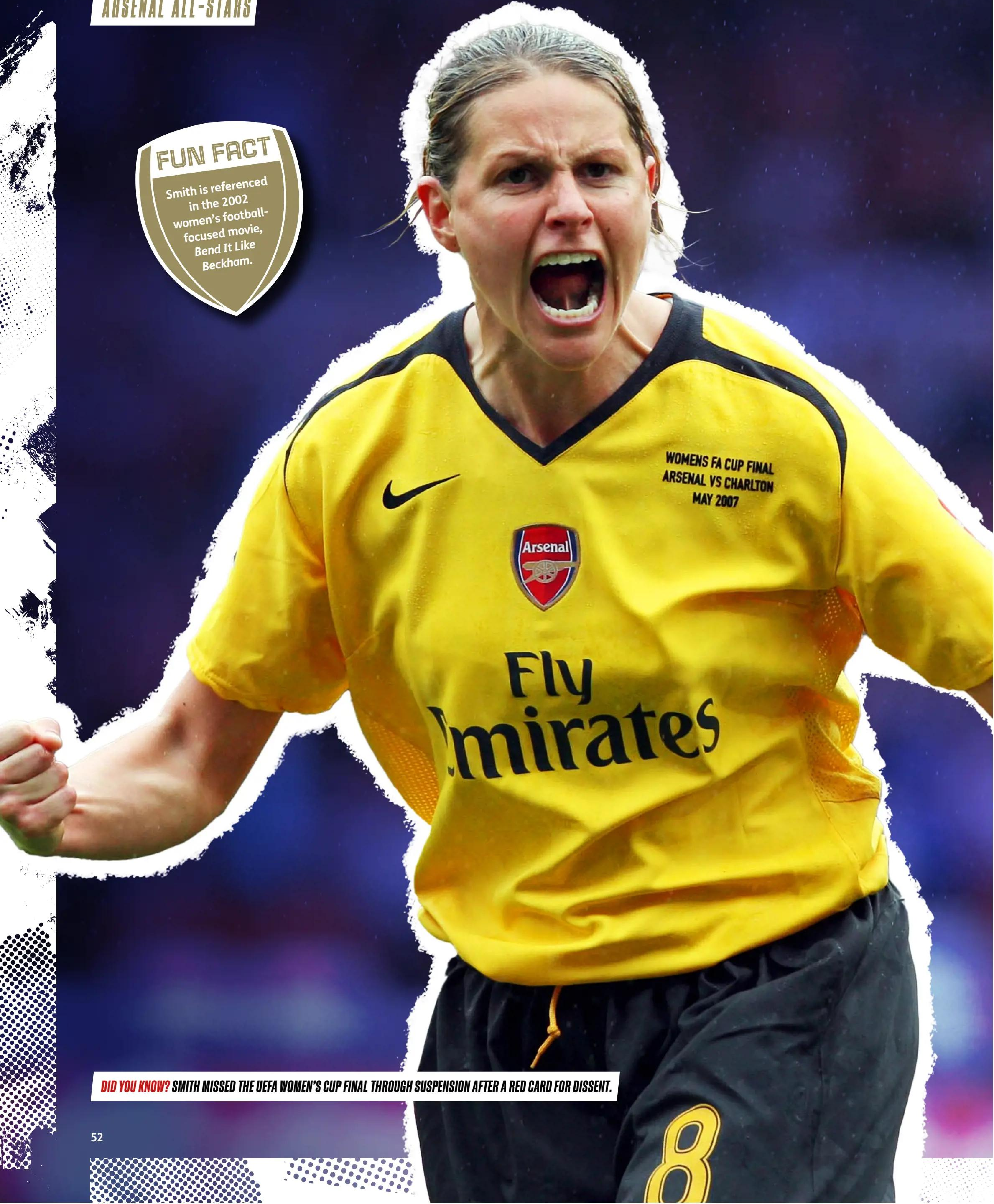
Martinelli showed his ability to step up in the biggest games for Arsenal with a stunning solo goal against London rivals Chelsea in 2020, when he ran the length of the Stamford Bridge pitch to net for the Gunners. It would go on to be voted the club's Goal of the Season by Arsenal fans and was one of several goals he'd score in decisive games, with the Brazilian earning a reputation as a master of the grandest stages.



Main image Paul Terry / Alamy **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

FUN FACT

Smith is referenced in the 2002 women's football-focused movie, *Bend It Like Beckham.*


WOMENS FA CUP FINAL
ARSENAL VS CHARLTON
MAY 2007
Arsenal
Fly Emirates
8

DID YOU KNOW? SMITH MISSED THE UEFA WOMEN'S CUP FINAL THROUGH SUSPENSION AFTER A RED CARD FOR DISSENT.

KELLY SMITH

Kelly Smith became one of the greatest women's players of all time, winning everything at Arsenal

Kelly Smith's start in football is sadly familiar for girls of her age. Banned from boys' teams in Hertfordshire for being too good, she had to leave England – and a contract with Arsenal – for Stateside soccer, just to make a career for herself.

Smith returned to London in 2005 as one of the most accomplished players of her generation – and with unfinished business. Under Vic Akers and young coach Emma Hayes, she transformed the Gunners, winning a Quadruple in 2007 with 30 goals in all competitions. It's still a feat unrepeated in either the men's or women's game.

In three spells with Arsenal, she didn't just change the club, but challenged the whole perception of her sport. Smith was adored for her technical ability, of course, but Gooners had a special soft spot for her fiery attitude, too.

Former England manager Hope Powell would compare her to Messi and Maradona. For Arsenal Women, though, there is no parallel to Smith.

FOUR TIMES A HERO

Arsenal's Quadruple of 2007 remains unequalled in English football, with Smith the undisputed superstar of the team. The striker netted a brace in the FA Cup final against Charlton in a 4-1 win, and played both creator and goalscorer all season in a team that won every Women's Premier League match with a total goal difference of +109. Their heroics helped pave the way for the WSL and the explosion of women's football.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **29 OCTOBER 1978**
BIRTHPLACE: **WATFORD, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **168CM (5'6")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **1996-97, 2005-09, 2012-17**
NUMBER: **10**

STATS & RECORDS

73 LEAGUE GOALS IN 66 GAMES IN HER SECOND ARSENAL SPELL

46 SECOND-MOST GOALS FOR ENGLAND WOMEN

9 HAT-TRICKS SCORED FOR ARSENAL WOMEN

MAJOR HONOURS

5x WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

5x WOMEN'S FA CUP

1x WOMEN'S LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
156
GOALS
130

Main image David Price / Getty **Boxout** David Price / Getty

DECLAN RICE

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
103

GOALS
16

> “RICE WON OVER EVERYONE EARLY ON IN HIS ARSENAL CAREER”

An all-action midfield dynamo, Declan Rice has transformed Arsenal into true challengers at the top tier of football

Scanning through the list of players who cost their clubs £100 million or more – Neymar at PSG, João Félix at Atlético Madrid, Philippe Coutinho at Barcelona, among others – Gooners would have been forgiven for any trepidation over Arsenal buying Declan Rice.

The West Ham United captain became the most expensive English player of all time when he moved from East London to N5... and yet he's arguably been a bargain.

Rice won over everyone early on in his Arsenal career with a last-minute goal against Manchester United and hasn't stopped running since, while also adding corner-taking to his list of talents. He added much-needed steel to Mikel Arteta's side and Arsenal went an impressive 21 games unbeaten against the so-called Big Six after bringing the midfielder to the Emirates Stadium.

But perhaps his true coronation came against Real Madrid, arrowing two pinpoint free kicks into the net against the European champions. Sometimes, paying nine figures really does show in a player.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **14 JANUARY 1999**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **188CM (6'2")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2023-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **41**

% STATS & RECORDS

£105,000,000 ARSENAL'S ALL-TIME RECORD SIGNING

2 FREE KICKS SCORED AGAINST REAL MADRID IN ONE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GAME

7 LEAGUE GOALS AND EIGHT ASSISTS IN RICE'S FIRST ARSENAL SEASON, A CAREER-BEST

RECORD-BREAKER

When Rice joined Arsenal, he signed for a nine-figure fee, to become not just the most expensive player in the club's history but one of the most expensive in the Premier League. The midfielder has been worth every penny, however, becoming an integral part of Mikel Arteta's side and the beating heart of the Gunners' engine room, increasing the number of goals he scores and even taking corners and free kicks.

Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** David Price / Getty

Mark Pain / Alamy

A STRONG START

After winning the Community Shield on his debut, Rice's first goal was memorable, too. Arsenal thought they'd just lost to Manchester United at home before Alejandro Garnacho's goal was ruled offside – but in the dying moments of the game, Rice popped up to scramble the ball into the net to give Arsenal the win following a corner. Pandemonium ensued: the Emirates had a new hero.

FUN FACT

Rice was released from Chelsea on the same day as ex-Gunners team-mate, Eddie Nketiah.

THE REAL DEAL

With European champions Real Madrid visiting Arsenal in the 2025 Champions League quarter-finals, one man stepped up to the plate. Rice's first free-kick strike was clever, as he bent the ball around the wall – but his second was unstoppable, arrowing into the top corner of Thibaut Courtois' net, leaving the Belgian motionless. It was the first time anyone had scored two free kicks in a Champions League knockout phase match – Rice won Man of the Match in the return leg and also earned a place in the UEFA Champions League Team of the Season.

***DID YOU KNOW?* RICE WEARS THE NO.41 SHIRT AS IT WAS HIS FIRST NUMBER AT WEST HAM.**

Mark Pain / Alamy

LAST-GASP AT LUTON

One of the strangest games of the 2023-24 season, Arsenal looked to be cruising early on against Luton Town at Kenilworth Road, until a basketball-like game ensued, in which the Hatters levelled the scores at 3-3. Once again, Rice was the hero, netting a last-second winner to keep title hopes alive. He was certainly becoming the player to rely on in the biggest of occasions.

Justin Setterfield / Getty

BEST OF THE REST GOALKEEPERS

The Gunners have a rich history of top stoppers, including some of the greatest keepers of all time

Christopher Lee / Getty

PA Photos / Alamy

JENS LEHMANN

Arsenal fans had more than enough reason to feel uneasy about the season ahead in July 2003, watching London rivals Chelsea go on a mega-money spending spree under their new Russian ownership – all while Arsène Wenger added just one new face to the squad.

That man was Jens Lehmann, who replaced the legendary David Seaman for under £5m. Though expectations about his potential were low, the German didn't lose a game in his first season and became a dependable – if eccentric – pillar between the posts. Lehmann was supremely confident, an excellent shot-stopper and would command his backline to push up the pitch.

In 2005-06, he came into his own, however, setting the record for the longest-ever run without conceding in the Champions League. His red card in the final is still seen as controversial: and means that he didn't actually let a goal in during the knockout stages.

BOB WILSON

Goalkeepers aren't usually the superstars of a team, but Bob Wilson was well worth watching. The Scotsman was pure cinema, coming from nowhere to throw himself at strikers' feet, often at great personal cost – he broke his arm in the 1969-70 season – perfecting a style of sweeper-keeper that blended fearlessness with exquisite timing. After winning the Fairs Cup in 1970, Wilson was the reliable last line during Highbury's first-ever Double season a year later, and he retired in 1974 with over 300 games under his belt.

Wilson became a fan favourite during his time at the Gunners, making every one of his league appearances for the club and later became a household name when he went into broadcasting. The beloved custodian was a huge figure off the pitch at Arsenal, too, becoming a goalkeeping coach to Pat Jennings and David Seaman – he was even best man for the latter.

Alex Burstow / Getty

BIG GABI
Brazilian defender Gabriel celebrates after scoring the winner against Arsenal's rivals Tottenham Hotspur in 2024.

14
3
S-MAX
S-MAX

David Price / Getty

Emira
FLY BE

RICE RICE BABY
Declan Rice celebrates after scoring the first of his two stunning free kicks against Real Madrid in 2025.

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

DUTCH MASTER
Dennis Bergkamp scores one of the greatest goals in Premier League history against Newcastle United during the 2001-02 season.

FLY BETTER
AUTHENTIC LICENSED PRODUCT

David Price / Getty

THE STARBOY
Bukayo Saka came through Arsenal's Hale End academy to become one of the team's biggest current stars.

Mark Pain/ Alamy

EZE DOES IT
Boyhood Arsenal fan and former academy player Eberechi Eze returned to the club in 2025, 14 years after being released.

Stuart MacFarlane/ Getty

Emirates
FLY BETTER

Arsenal
ates
TTER

THE GUNMAN
Swedish striker Viktor Gyökeres joined the Gunners in July 2025 after scoring 97 goals in 102 games for Sporting Lisbon.

Stuart MacFarlane/ Getty

KING HENRY
Thierry Henry scored a record 228 goals for Arsenal, but few were as memorable as his winner against Real Madrid at the Bernabéu in 2006.

Emirates
FLY BETTER
HEAT.RDY

Mark Pain / Alamy

PRINCESS LEAH
Defender Leah Williamson celebrates after victory over FC Barcelona in the 2025 UEFA Women's Champions League final.

Evening Standard / Getty

JOHN LUKIC

"I still think John Lukic is one of the best keepers in the country," George Graham admitted, even after bringing in David Seaman to replace the outgoing No.1. In seven years in North London, Lukic was as steady as anyone, backing himself to usurp the legendary Pat Jennings, being a fulcrum in the side that lifted the League Cup in 1987 and keeping the all-important clean sheet at Anfield to win the league two years later.

Arsenal agreed with Graham years later. In 1996, Lukic would re-sign for the Gunners, and though he'd only make 21 appearances in his final five years at the club, he typified the spirit that Arsène Wenger demanded from his entire squad: the veteran was always ready should he be called upon, and he offered the kind of leadership and experience that the Frenchman loved from his older heads.

Mark Leech/Offside / Alamy

JACK KELSEY

There aren't many goalkeepers who frustrated Pelé – the Brazilian labelled him, "the cat with magnetic paws" – but Jack Kelsey is regarded as one of Britain's finest-ever in the position for a reason... even if his first-team debut became famous for being Arsenal's heaviest home defeat in over 20 years.

Kelsey was spotted in the regional leagues of his native Swansea and spent two years in the Gunners' reserves before getting his chance in the first team. From there, he didn't look back, becoming a mainstay in the team for over a decade and though this wasn't a fruitful period for the club in terms of silverware, Kelsey was a superstar of the team, regarded among British football as one of the very best in the world.

After a back injury, the Welshman was forced to retire early. But Kelsey left behind plenty of memories of his brilliance – and was regarded as a gentleman by those who met him.

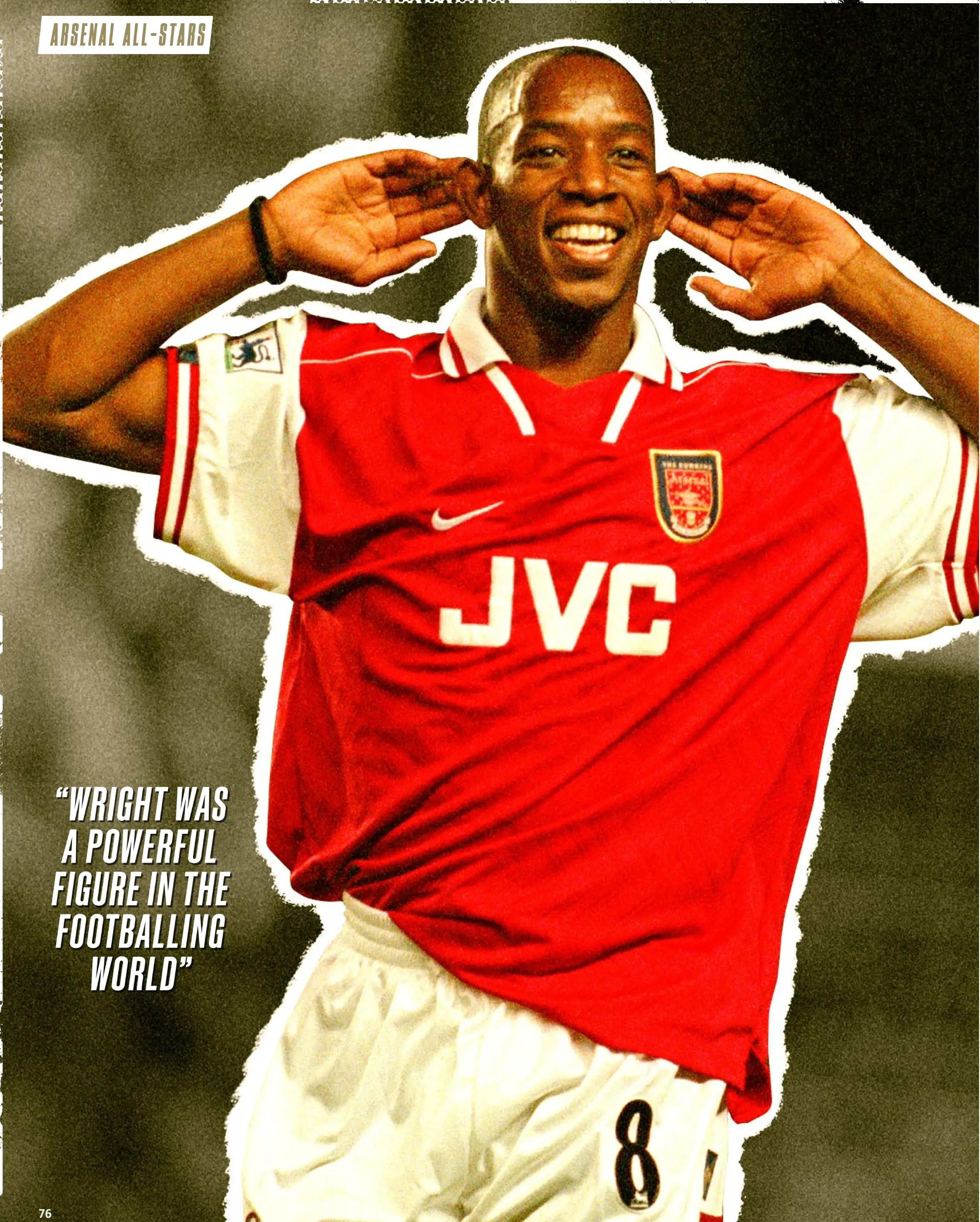
PAT JENNINGS

Pat Jennings is an extremely rare case for a number of reasons. There aren't many goalkeepers who could pick the ball out of the air with just the one hand – and even fewer footballers who could play on both sides of North London and command respect from each. When he retired, he was even given a farewell match between the two bitter rivals. It was perhaps the friendliest the fixture has ever been.

The Northern Irishman was a colossus in goal and to this day, goes down as one of Great Britain's greatest-ever custodians: his goalkeeping coach Bob Wilson later claimed that there was absolutely nothing he could teach him. Jennings moved down the Seven Sisters Road at an age where Tottenham thought he didn't have long left in his career, but he proved them wrong: he kept net for Arsenal for eight years, taking the Gunners to four cup finals.

Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

ages Getty, Alamy



“WRIGHT WAS A POWERFUL FIGURE IN THE FOOTBALLING WORLD”

IAN WRIGHT

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
288

GOALS
185

Perhaps the most beloved striker in English footballing history, Ian Wright scored for fun – and had fun while scoring

At the age of 22, Ian Wright was still playing semi-professional football for £30 a week. Imagine telling him that by his early 30s, he would be the all-time scorer for the club he loved.

When he scored that 179th strike in a red-and-white shirt, revealing a Nike T-shirt that read "Just Done It", the entirety of Highbury adored Wrighty, too. The striker was lightning quick, agile and aggressive – but most importantly for fans, played with his heart on his sleeve, grinning away with that gold tooth and never losing the joy that he'd played with in the park.

Wright was a powerful figure in the footballing world. He was a role model for the way he represented the black community and working-class Londoners, having escaped from an abusive home as a child to become a cinematic hero in front of the North Bank.

He was quite the leading man and has become a true national treasure.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **3 NOVEMBER 1963**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **1991-98**
NUMBER: **8**

STATS & RECORDS

11 HAT-TRICKS SCORED FOR ARSENAL, INCLUDING FOUR GOALS VS EVERTON IN 1991

6 SUCCESSIVE SEASONS AS ARSENAL'S TOP SCORER

17 OUT OF 19 TEAMS SCORED AGAINST IN 1996-97, A RECORD FOR A 20 TEAM PL SEASON AT THE TIME

MAJOR HONOURS

1x PREMIER LEAGUE

2x FA CUP

1x LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

SOLID FIRST IMPRESSION

It was good pal David Rocastle who spoke to Wright to convince him to come to Arsenal in 1991 – so it was fitting that Rocky and Wrighty celebrated together on the latter's debut with a goal. It was a sign of things to come from the new striker, who wasted no time acquainting himself with fans after netting against Leicester in the League Cup, then scoring a hat-trick against Southampton on his league debut.

Main image Mark Leech/Offside / Getty **Boxout** Shaun Botterill / Getty

THE CELEBRATION KING

Wright was known by Arsenal fans for his infectious personality, bringing a sense that he was playing on the streets to Highbury. After netting against Coventry in 1992, he danced on the spot – something still fairly novel for the time – while after another strike, he revealed a T-shirt reading, “I love the lads”. It was this personality that would make him a national treasure over time.

> “AFTER NETTING AGAINST COVENTRY IN 1992, HE DANCED ON THE SPOT”

Simon Bruty / Getty

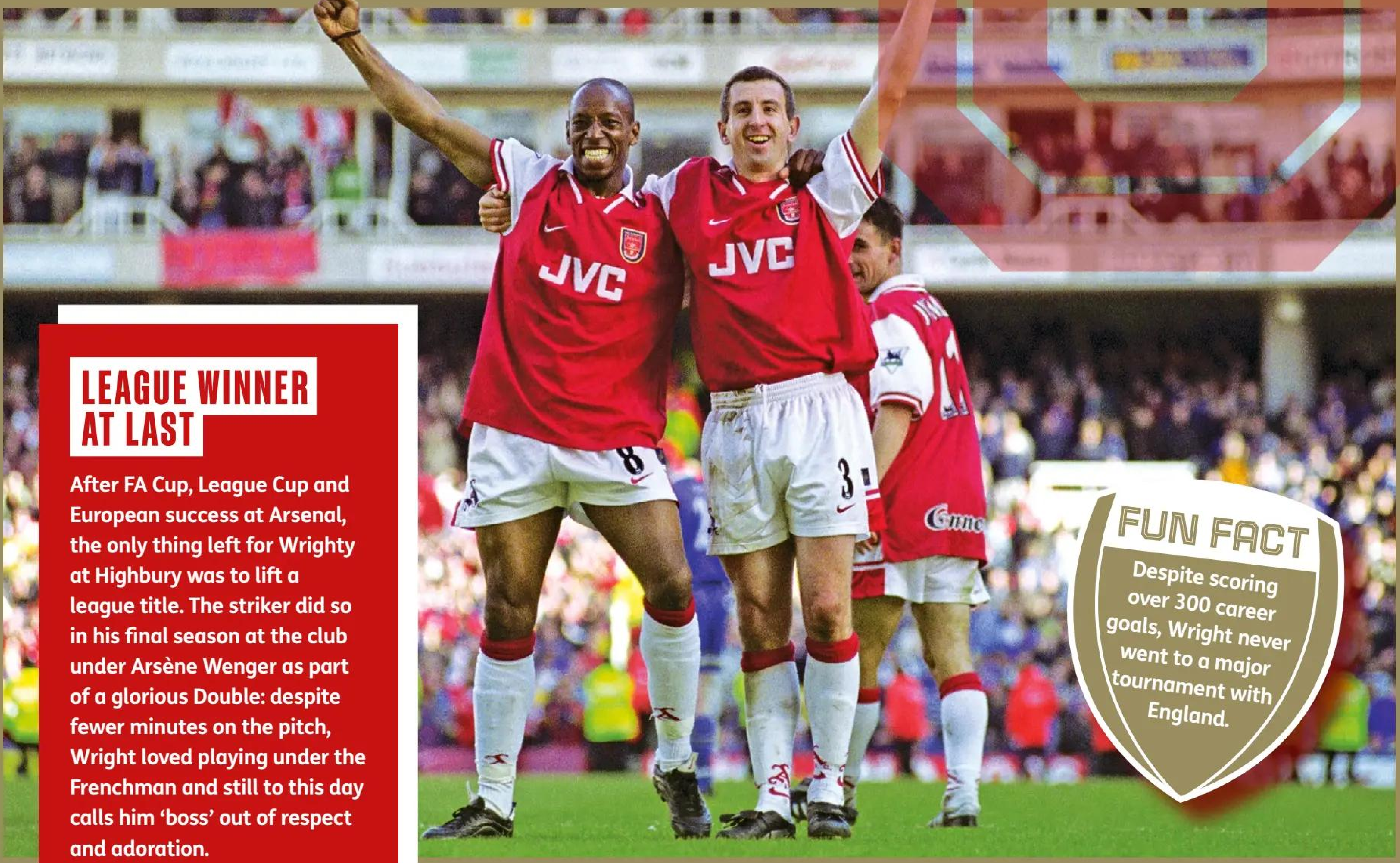
DID YOU KNOW? WRIGHT WAS COACHED BY HARRY REDKNAPP, JOHN BARNES AND DAVID PLATT IN HIS CAREER.

JUST DONE IT

With two goals already against Bolton Wanderers in 1997, Wright completed his hat-trick to net his 179th goal for the Gunners, breaking Arsenal's long-standing goal record held by Cliff Bastin. Wright's memorable celebration saw him reveal a T-shirt with a play on Nike's iconic 'Just Do It' tagline: he would finish his Arsenal career mere months later on a tally of 185 – not bad, considering he joined the club when he was already 27 years old.

179
just done it

Getty



LEAGUE WINNER AT LAST

After FA Cup, League Cup and European success at Arsenal, the only thing left for Wrighty at Highbury was to lift a league title. The striker did so in his final season at the club under Arsène Wenger as part of a glorious Double: despite fewer minutes on the pitch, Wright loved playing under the Frenchman and still to this day calls him 'boss' out of respect and adoration.

FUN FACT

Despite scoring over 300 career goals, Wright never went to a major tournament with England.

Tony Marshall / Getty

FUN FACT

George did not go into coaching or punditry when he retired... but bought a pub!

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **10 OCTOBER 1950**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **180CM (5'11")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **1968-75**
NUMBER: **11**

STATS & RECORDS

5 GOALS IN THE 1971 FA CUP-WINNING CAMPAIGN

3.4 GAMES PER GOAL IN THE 1970-71 LEAGUE-WINNING SEASON

11 GOALS IN THE 1971-72 AND 1972-73 SEASONS

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FIRST DIVISION

1x FA CUP

1x EUROPEAN FAIRS CUP

DID YOU KNOW? LONG AFTER RETIRING, GEORGE WAS A FAMILIAR GUIDE ON EMIRATES STADIUM 'LEGENDS TOURS'.

CHARLIE GEORGE

A rockstar of Highbury in the 1970s, boyhood Gooner Charlie George was the driving force behind Arsenal's first-ever Double

One of the most iconic images in the history of Arsenal Football Club is of Charlie George on his back, arms spread on the turf, in the sunshine.

The forward, who had supported the Gunners as a child, had just netted a fantastic winner in the FA Cup final against Liverpool, after scoring in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Rounds of the competition. A legend was born and Arsenal's lucky yellow shirts became legendary.

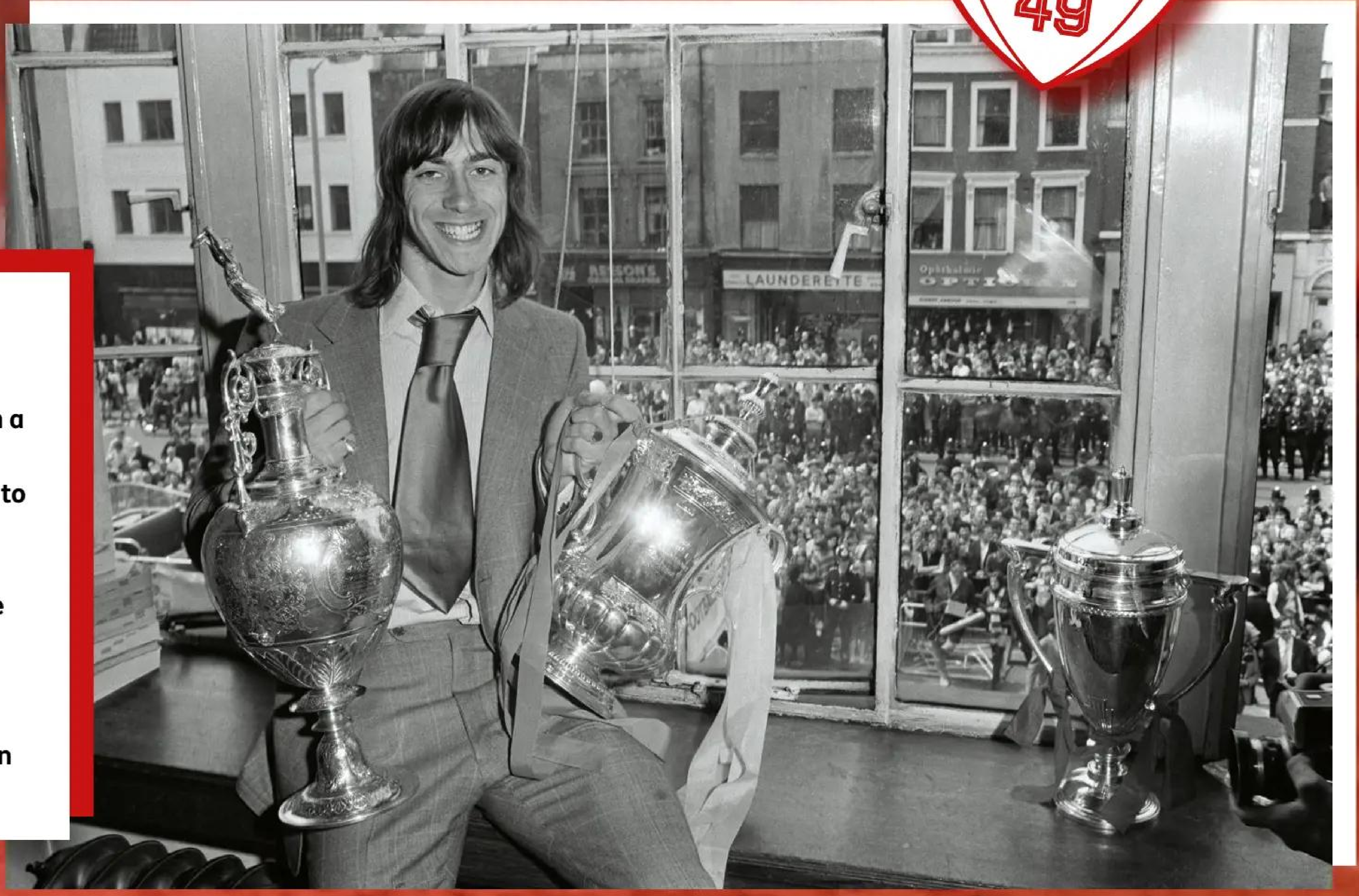
George had an aura about him and would strut around the pitch, much like a glam rock singer around a stage, with his cup exploits making him a household name overnight.

But he was a favourite with fans from the first minute, long before the Double, with them seeing the Islington-born player as one of their own. A North Londoner who went from the terraces to the hallowed steps of Wembley to lift the cup, George's story is one that Gooners never tire of hearing.

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
179

GOALS
49



DOUBLING UP

After coming back to the game from a broken ankle, George found himself out of the Arsenal side and needing to prove a point: what better way than with a league and cup Double? As a local lad, this meant more to George than most, and the forward later claimed that the 20,000 fans on the North Bank chanting his name was, "the biggest thrill you will ever get in your life".

Main image Getty **Boxout** Evening Standard / Getty

DAVID RAYA

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
96
CLEAN SHEETS
39

With eye-catching saves and shootout heroics, Arsenal's No.1 is a Spanish superstar, from Barcelona via Blackburn

Eyebrows were raised when David Raya was signed for Arsenal: simply because the club already had an excellent goalkeeper in Aaron Ramsdale, who'd barely put a finger wrong since inheriting the gloves from Bernd Leno.

But while some wondered how Raya fitted into Mikel Arteta's masterplan, over time, he would prove the doubters wrong and establish himself as one of the world's elite.

A reaction save in his first North London Derby endeared fans to the Spanish stopper – who moved from Barcelona to Blackburn Rovers as a 16-year-old and picked up more than a twang of a Lancastrian accent. Pretty soon, the No.1 shirt was only ever going to be Raya's, as he showed his cross-claiming and footwork to be among the best in the world.

At 30, Raya is young in goalkeeping terms – and could well have solved a problem position for the Gunners for a while yet.

PENALTY SHOOTOUT HERO

The moment that some Arsenal fans truly fell in love with Raya came against Porto during his first season. When a nervy two-legged knockout tie in the Champions League went to penalties at the Emirates Stadium, the Spaniard stepped up and was the hero in saving two penalties to send Arsenal to the next round against Bayern Munich. The following season, he'd continue to impress with a stunning double-save from a penalty against Atalanta in the same competition.

Emirates
Fly Better
2

DAVID RAYA

FUN FACT

Raya was born in Barcelona but actually grew up as a fan of their rivals, Real Madrid.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **15 SEPTEMBER 1995**
BIRTHPLACE: **BARCELONA, SPAIN**
NATIONALITY: **SPANISH**
HEIGHT: **183CM (6'0")**
POSITION: **GOALKEEPER**
YEARS: **2024-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **1**

STATS & RECORDS

2 PREMIER LEAGUE GOLDEN GLOVE AWARDS IN HIS FIRST TWO SEASONS AT ARSENAL

16 CLEAN SHEETS IN 32 GAMES IN HIS DEBUT SEASON AT ARSENAL

23 MOST CLEAN SHEETS OF ANY ARSENAL GOALKEEPER IN HIS FIRST 50 APPEARANCES

DID YOU KNOW? RAYA KEPT A CLEAN SHEET IN HIS FIRST PREMIER LEAGUE APPEARANCE – AGAINST ARSENAL, FOR BRENTFORD.

Main image Alex Pantling / Getty **Boxout** Shaun Botterill / Getty

FREDDIE LJUNGBERG

As box office as they came, Arsenal's super Swede was a big-game player like never seen before

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES 328

GOALS 72

Freddie Ljungberg may not have scored every week – but he did score when it mattered. Whether it was the top-of-the-table clashes with Manchester United, Champions League ties, derbies, grudge matches or his beautiful curling effort in the 2002 FA Cup final – his second in as many years in the fixture – the Swedish superstar always showed up on the biggest stages.

His personality was infectious, too. Ljungberg played with an aggressive streak that added some bite to the Gunners – but he was a cult favourite, depicted in a cartoon strip within the official *Arsenal* magazine. Hair dye in London was in short supply during his time in the Premier League, with kids recreating his iconic pink Mohican in tribute.

Ljungberg was so unknown when he joined that Arsène Wenger had never seen him play in person. By the time he left North London, he'd woven himself into Arsenal history with countless big goals. He did it all with his own unique style, as well.

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF

As first impressions go, Ljungberg's turned out to be pretty special. Gooners didn't know much about their new buy but the Swede came off the bench against Manchester United in 1998 to score on his debut in a 3-0 win and would have plenty of luck against the Red Devils over the years: he scored home and away against them the following season and got another in 2001-02 en route to a Double.

FREDDIE LJUNGBERG

FUN FACT

Wenger signed Ljungberg after watching him on television for Sweden against England.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **16 APRIL 1977**
BIRTHPLACE: **VITTSJÖ, SWEDEN**
NATIONALITY: **SWEDISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1998-2007**
NUMBER: **8**

STATS & RECORDS

13 JOINT FOURTH-MOST CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GOALS FOR ARSENAL

2 GOALS IN FA CUP FINALS

17 GOALS FROM MIDFIELD IN THE 2001-02 DOUBLE-WINNING CAMPAIGN

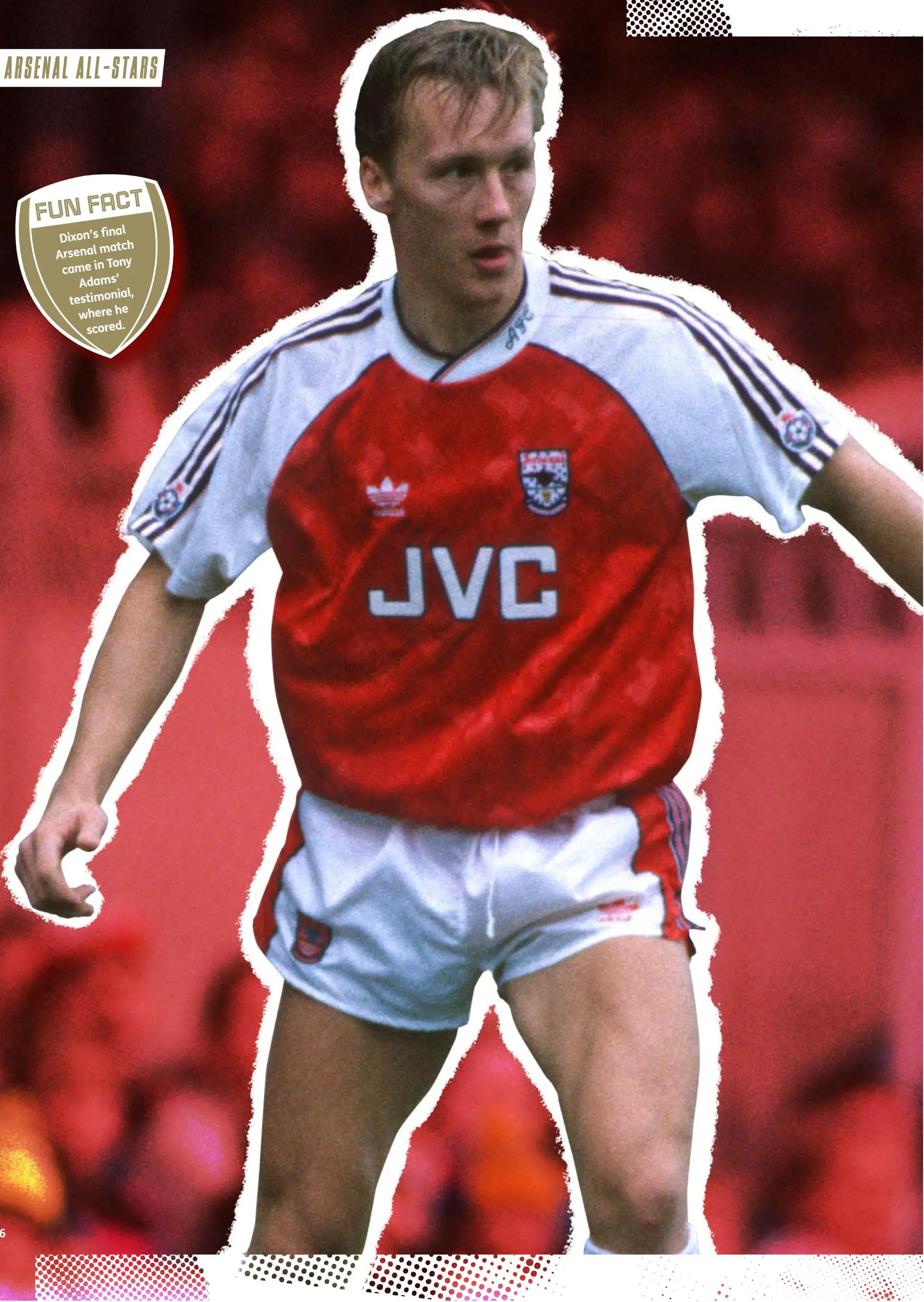
MAJOR HONOURS

2x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

Main image Phil Cole / Getty **Boxout** Clive Brunskill / Getty

DID YOU KNOW? LJUNGBERG'S FIRST NAME IS KARL, WITH FREDERIK HIS MIDDLE NAME.



FUN FACT

Dixon's final Arsenal match came in Tony Adams' testimonial, where he scored.

DID YOU KNOW? DIXON WENT VIRAL FOR ADOPTING AN OWL NAMED HOOTY MCOWLFACE.

LEE DIXON

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES **619**

GOALS **28**

A defender of solidity and sureness, Dixon was a quarter of the classic back four – and loved for his dependability

Lee Dixon joined Arsenal from Stoke City after George Graham scoured the local newspapers to read which players were standing out to journalists in the north of England. Before playing Tottenham for the first time, he was pinned up against the wall and given a lesson on the fixture's importance.

What Dixon adds to the story, however, was that it was his own team-mates drilling into him the importance of North London Derby bragging rights. It was something he didn't need reminding of again.

Over the course of 14 years, Dixon made the right-back role his own, balancing support in attack with an assured defensive game. He was one of Graham's generals, before Arsène Wenger leaned on his experience.

Dixon is one of the classic backline that became a byword in the 90s for solidity and strength. He ended up a Gooner, drilling the club's heritage into the next generation.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **17 MARCH 1964**
BIRTHPLACE: **MANCHESTER, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **173CM (5'8")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1988-2002**
NUMBER: **2**

STATS & RECORDS

3 DIXON WON TITLES IN THREE DECADES WITH ARSENAL

458 LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

10 PENALTIES SCORED FOR ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

2x FIRST DIVISION

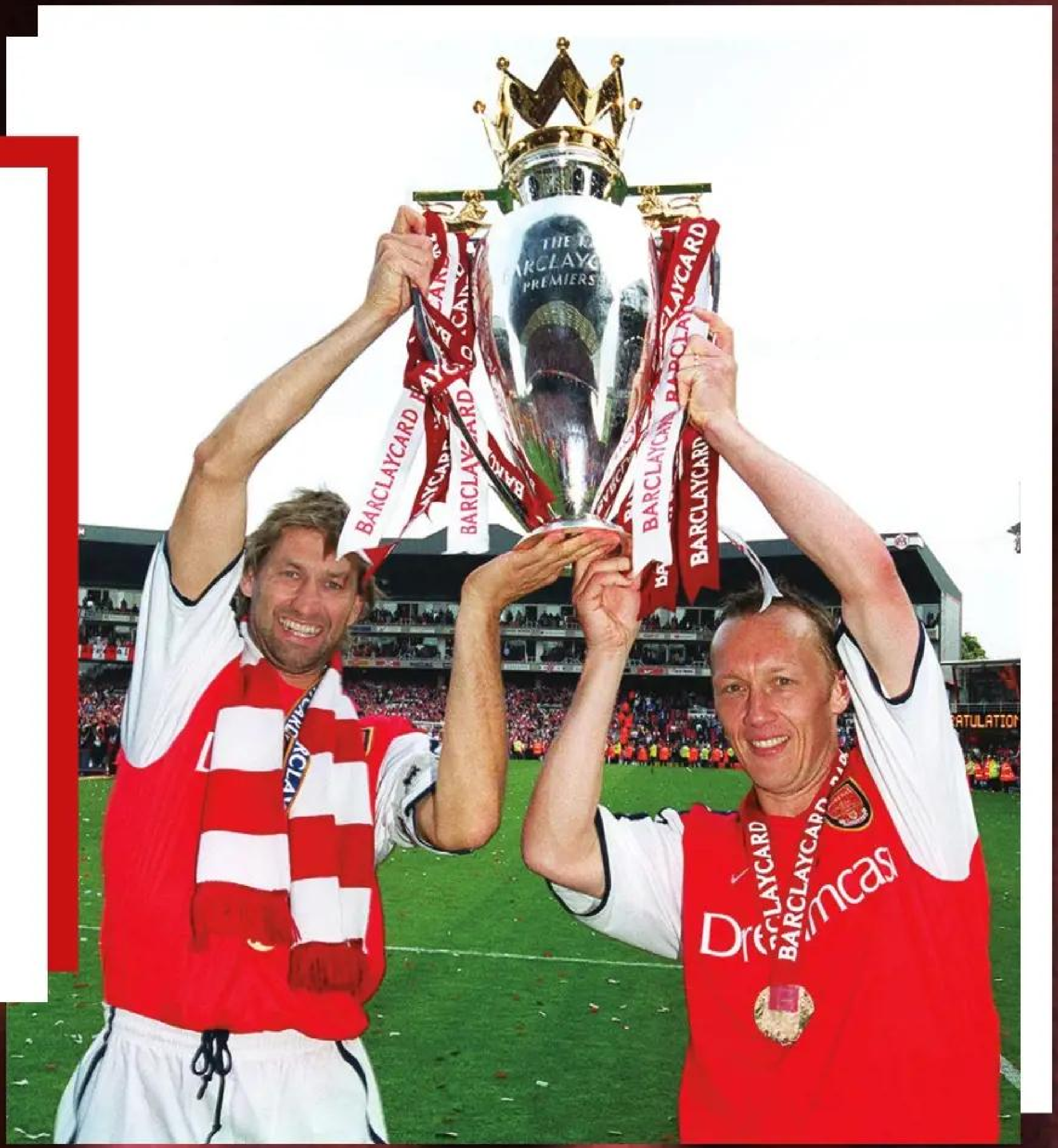
2x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

DEPENDABLE DIXON

By 2001-02, only Tony Adams and Dixon remained from the classic back four. After missing the entirety of the first half of the season, the stalwart full-back was relied upon in the second half of the campaign, coming on to defend leads and providing valuable cover in defence. In the final fixture of the season against Everton, Dixon was captain for the afternoon, playing a last 90 minutes as the Gunners won the title.



Main image Mark Leech/Offside / Getty **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

No room for racism
Emirates
FLY BETTER
HEAT.RDY

FUN FACT

Nwaneri was the third under-18 to score five goals in a season, after Michael Owen and Wayne Rooney.

DID YOU KNOW? ETHAN'S YOUNGER BROTHER EMERSON IS ALSO PART OF ARSENAL'S ACADEMY AND IS CURRENTLY A MEMBER OF THE U16 SQUAD.

ETHAN NWANERI

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
39
GOALS
9

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **21 MARCH 2007**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **176CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2022-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **22**

STATS & RECORDS

15 YEARS AND 6 MONTHS
THE YOUNGEST PREMIER LEAGUE PLAYER EVER

37 APPEARANCES IN ALL COMPETITIONS IN HIS FIRST FULL SEASON

2 GOALS IN HIS FIRST START, AGAINST BOLTON IN THE LEAGUE CUP IN 2024

The Premier League's youngest-ever player, Ethan Nwaneri is far more than just 'one for the future'

Ethan Nwaneri was handed a Premier League debut at 15 years of age. He was so young that he wasn't allowed in the team changing room!

Just a few years later and he has now become a regular fixture in a team that also contains talents born in a different century. Nwaneri may be young and still developing as a player, but his control and a penchant for the 'Saka strike' – whipping the ball with his left foot beyond the goalkeeper – make him one of the most exciting wonderkids in world football.

In September 2024, he netted his first senior goals in the League Cup: by March the following year, he and Myles Lewis-Skelly were combining to score in the Champions League. A first full season in 2024-25 led to a nomination for the PFA Young Player of the Year award. This is what Hale End is about: Nwaneri is schooled in the stylishness of Arsenal heroes of yesteryear – and his future is extremely bright.

ARRIVING AGAINST FOREST

Two seasons after his first minutes, Nwaneri truly burst onto the scene in the Premier League with a goal against Nottingham Forest. The teenager became the ninth-youngest scorer in the competition with a curling left-footed effort into the corner to wrap up the win for the Gunners – how many more times are we going to see that finish from the young gun over the coming years?

Main image Paul Marriott / Alamy **Boxout** Paul Marriott / Alamy

MARTIN KEOWN

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
449
GOALS
8

In two spells at Arsenal, Martin Keown struck fear into attackers and became a valued squad player to rely on

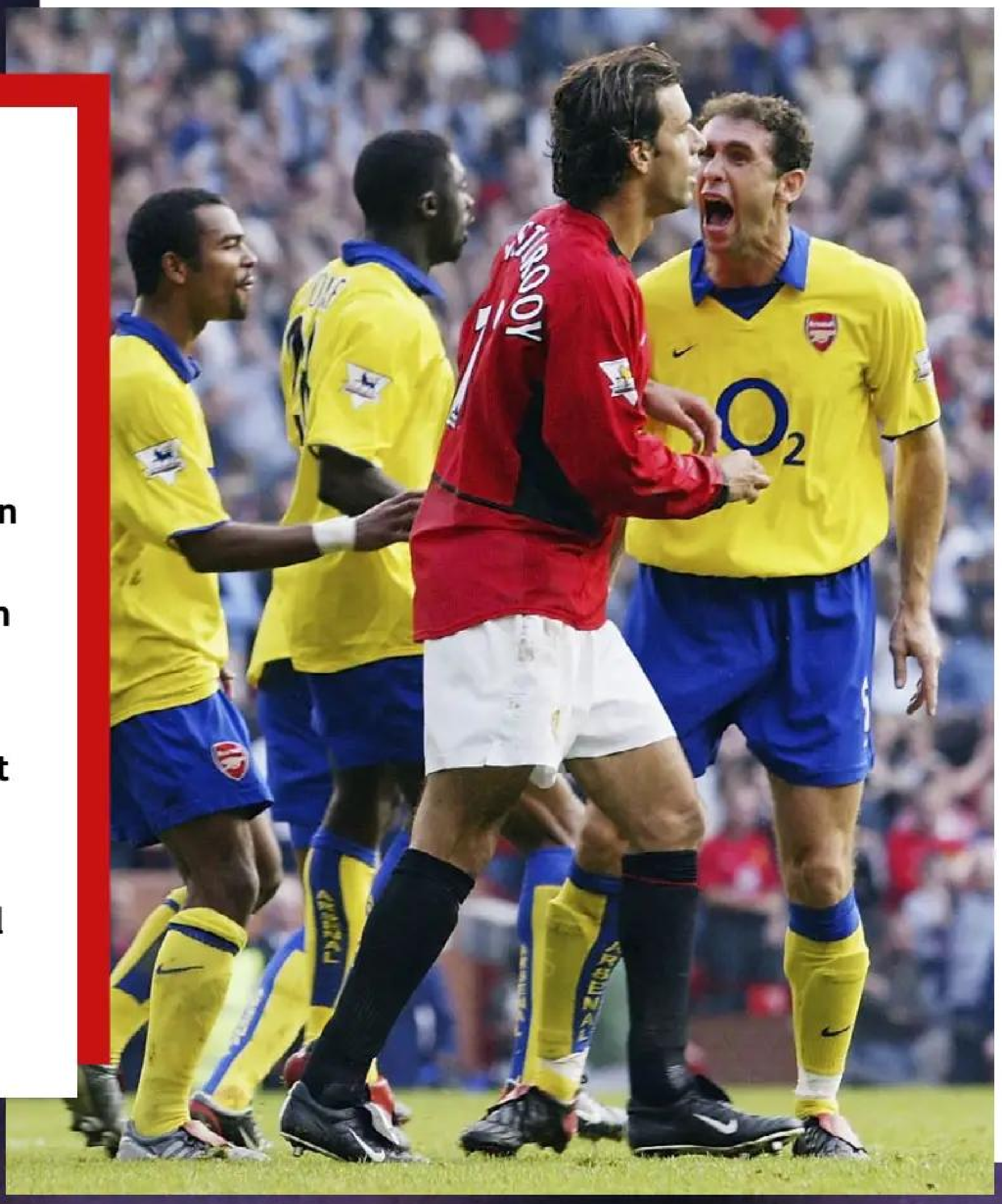
Martin Keown's testimonial featured David Beckham, Paul Gascoigne, Thierry Henry, Ian Wright, his son Shaun Wright-Phillips, and John Terry. The star-studded line-up was a reflection of how respected the Arsenal legend was in the world of football.

Throughout his Arsenal career, Keown was never the go-to guy in defence, coming into a team as backup to Tony Adams and Steve Bould, before Sol Campbell and Kolo Touré were signed ahead of him. Nevertheless, the England international never let Arsenal down across two spells at the club, thanks to his crunching tackles, disciplined positioning and valuable leadership. He managed to establish himself firmly in the side and played over 300 Premier League games for the Gunners.

Keown was an Arsenal man through and through, and his team-mates adored him. He is regarded as one of the last of a breed of no-nonsense defenders who excelled at locking up attackers: just ask Ruud van Nistelrooy...

A RUUD AWAKENING

The image of an enraged Keown baiting Van Nistelrooy has become iconic. Manchester United won a late penalty against Arsenal in the controversial 'Battle of Old Trafford' in 2003 and the Dutchman hit the bar: cue Keown screaming in his face, with team-mates surrounding the striker. Arsenal were fined heavily and a number of players received bans – yet Van Nistelrooy claimed in 2024 there was no bad blood upon meeting Keown again, greeting him like an old friend and reminiscing on one of the Premier League's greatest rivalries.



MARTIN KEOWN

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **24 JULY 1966**
BIRTHPLACE: **OXFORD, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **185CM (6'1")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1984-86, 1993-2004**
NUMBERS: **5, 14**

STATS & RECORDS

310 FOURTH-MOST PREMIER LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

3 INCLUDED IN THREE ENGLAND TOURNAMENT SQUADS AS AN ARSENAL PLAYER

7 FA CUP APPEARANCES (INC. REPLAYS) IN 1997-98, EN ROUTE TO WINNING THE TROPHY

MAJOR HONOURS

3x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

1x UEFA CUP WINNERS' CUP

FUN FACT

Arsène Wenger deployed Keown in defensive midfield in his first season at Arsenal.

DID YOU KNOW? KEOWN WAS THE FIRST MAN SINCE WORLD WAR II TO REJOIN ARSENAL.

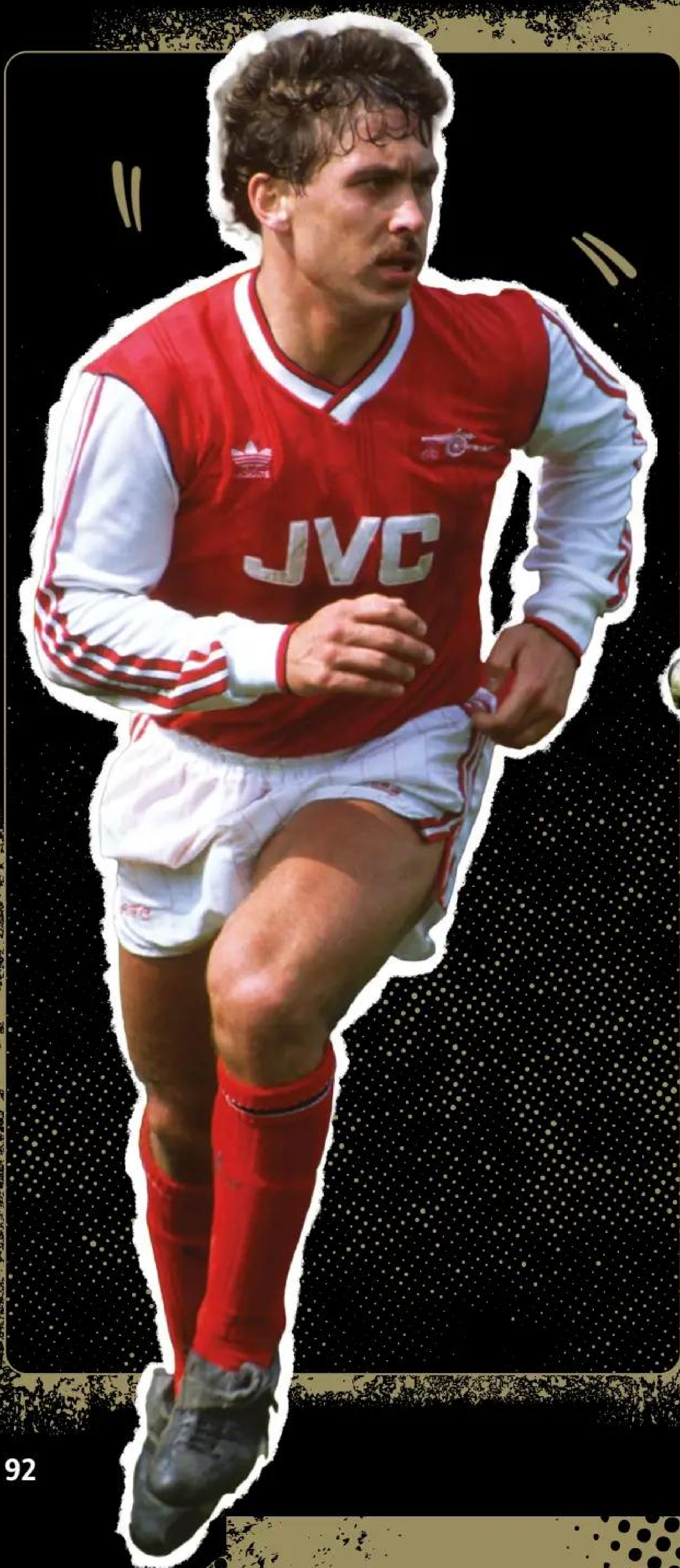
Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Shaun Botterill / Getty

BEST OF THE REST
DEFENDERS

Beyond the classic back four, Arsenal have had some iconic defenders wear the cannon over the years

KENNY SANSOM

Full-back isn't usually a place where you would expect to find your best player, but that's exactly where Kenny Sansom played. To sum up his consistency at the very top level, he appeared in the PFA First Division Team of the Year in seven of his eight seasons at the club. He won the League Cup in 1987 as a just reward for his stellar service with the Gunners: had he played in most other eras, he would have been a lot more highly regarded, too.



Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

Michael Steele / Getty

LAUREN

Lauren arrived from Mallorca in 2000 – turning down Real Madrid in the process – and quickly became the assured right-back that Arsenal needed following Lee Dixon's retirement. He was a completely different player, though. He would bomb up and down the touchline with gusto, with the Cameroonian becoming an integral part of the 2002 Double-winning team and the Invincibles two years later. He even scored two penalties in North London Derbies to write his own name in history among Gooners.

Shaun Botterill / Getty

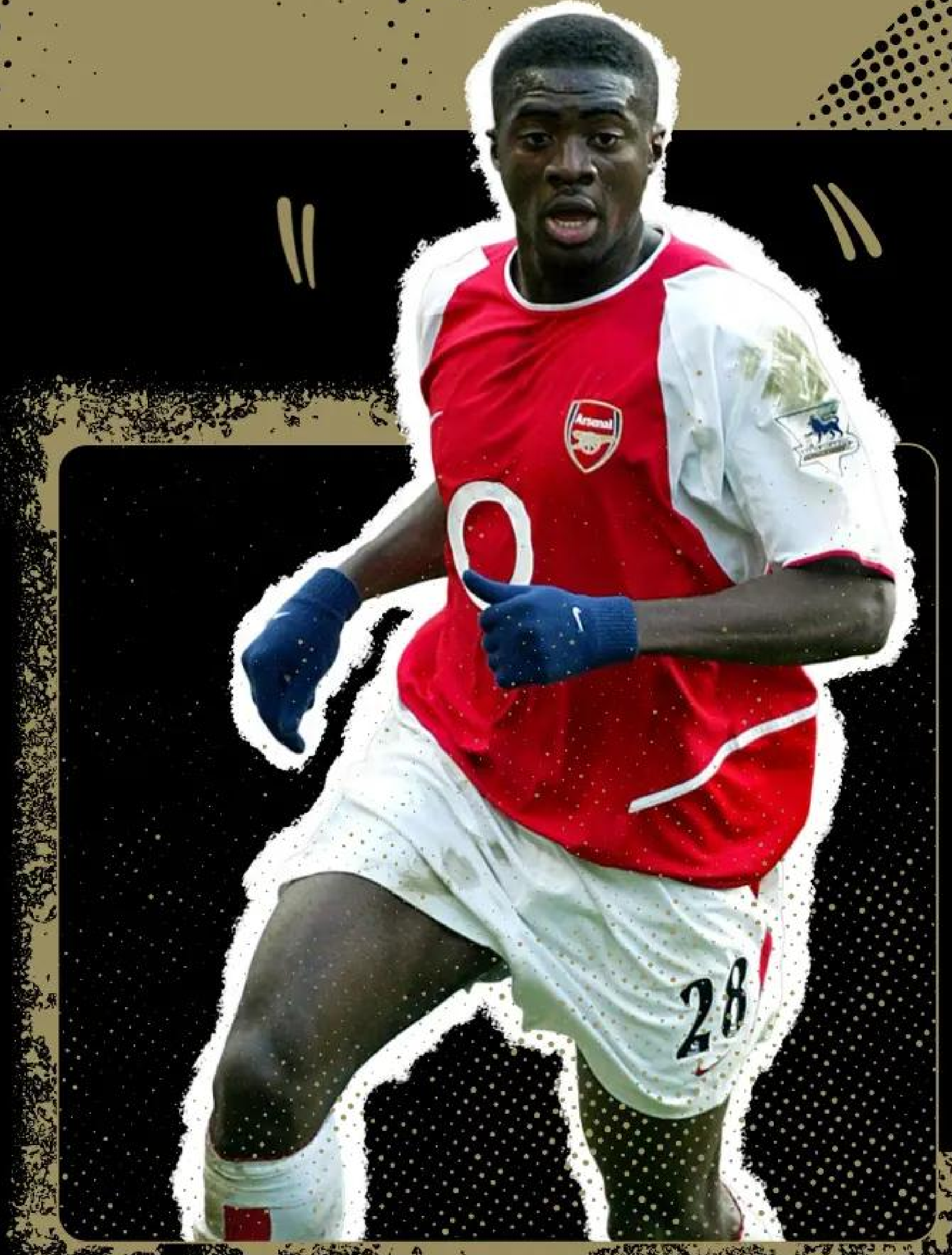
ASHLEY COLE

Leaving Arsenal for Chelsea soured Ashley Cole's legacy – but there's no denying his greatness. He was like having another attacker in the team, overlapping on the left to provide a dynamic presence alongside Thierry Henry and Robert Pires – while he was able to lock down the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo. A Double winner and Invincible, Cole was also three-time winner of the FA Cup with the Gunners – and he's the most decorated player in the competition's history, with seven titles.

Mirrorpix / Alamy

PETER STOREY

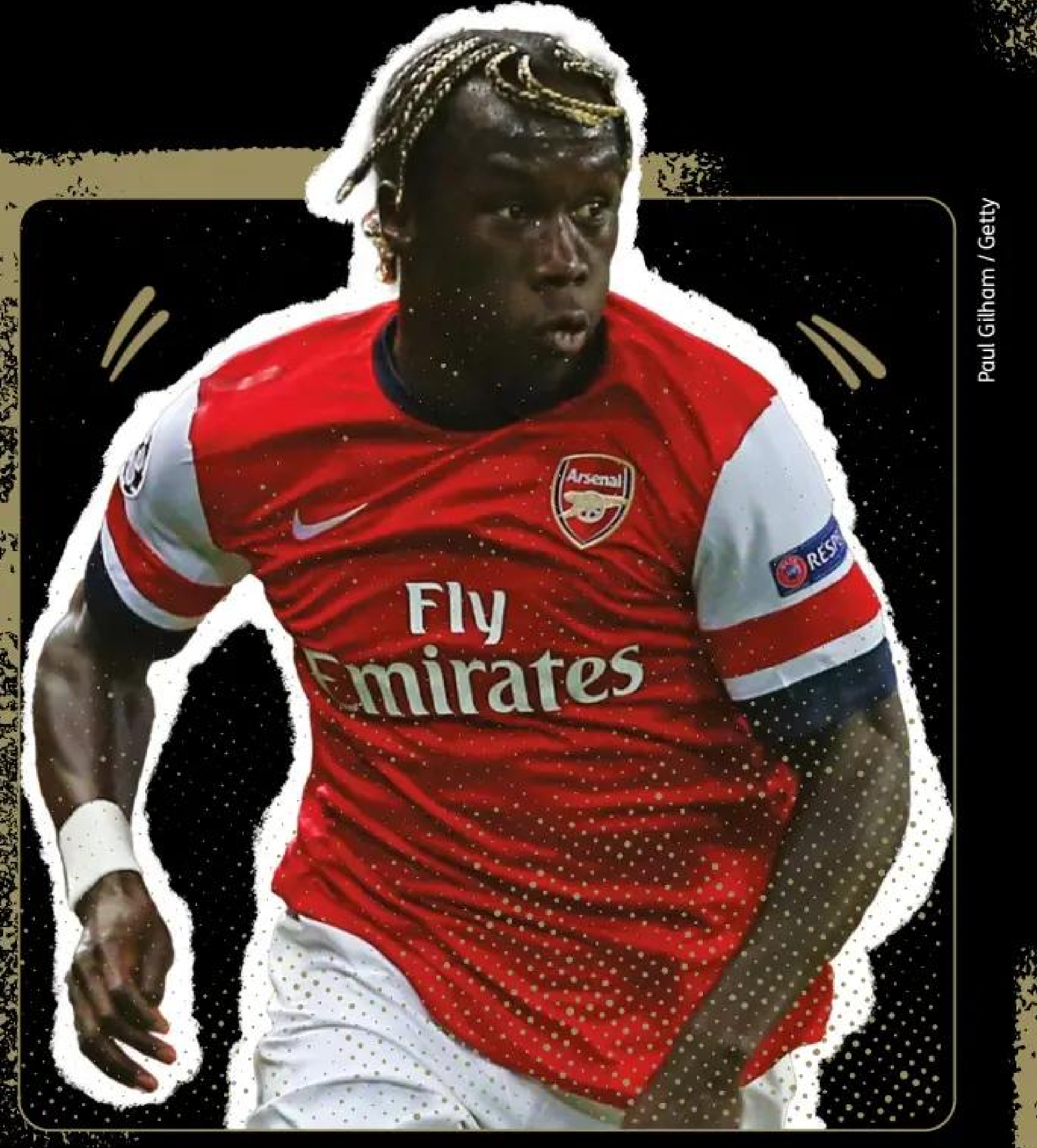
Fever Pitch author and Arsenal superfan Nick Hornby once cited Peter Storey as an example of a 1970s regular who actually "wasn't very good at football at all" – but that was surely not really the case here. Storey arrived in the Arsenal team at a time when they were going through a pretty major transition: he was to become a Rottweiler in his position at the back of the Double-winners, taking no prisoners on the field – but his aggression was underpinned by his reading of a game's rhythm.



Richard Sellers/Allstar / Getty

KOLO TOURÉ

Kolo Touré was so eager to impress on his trial at Arsenal that he dived in two-footed on Dennis Bergkamp, Thierry Henry… and Arsène Wenger. Luckily, the latter saw his passion and signed him up anyway. The Ivorian was destined to be a cult defender across the Premier League, costing just £150,000, and proving to become one of Arsenal's great bargains, as he transitioned from midfield to become a centre-back of steel and speed. He even developed composure over the years…



Paul Gilham / Getty

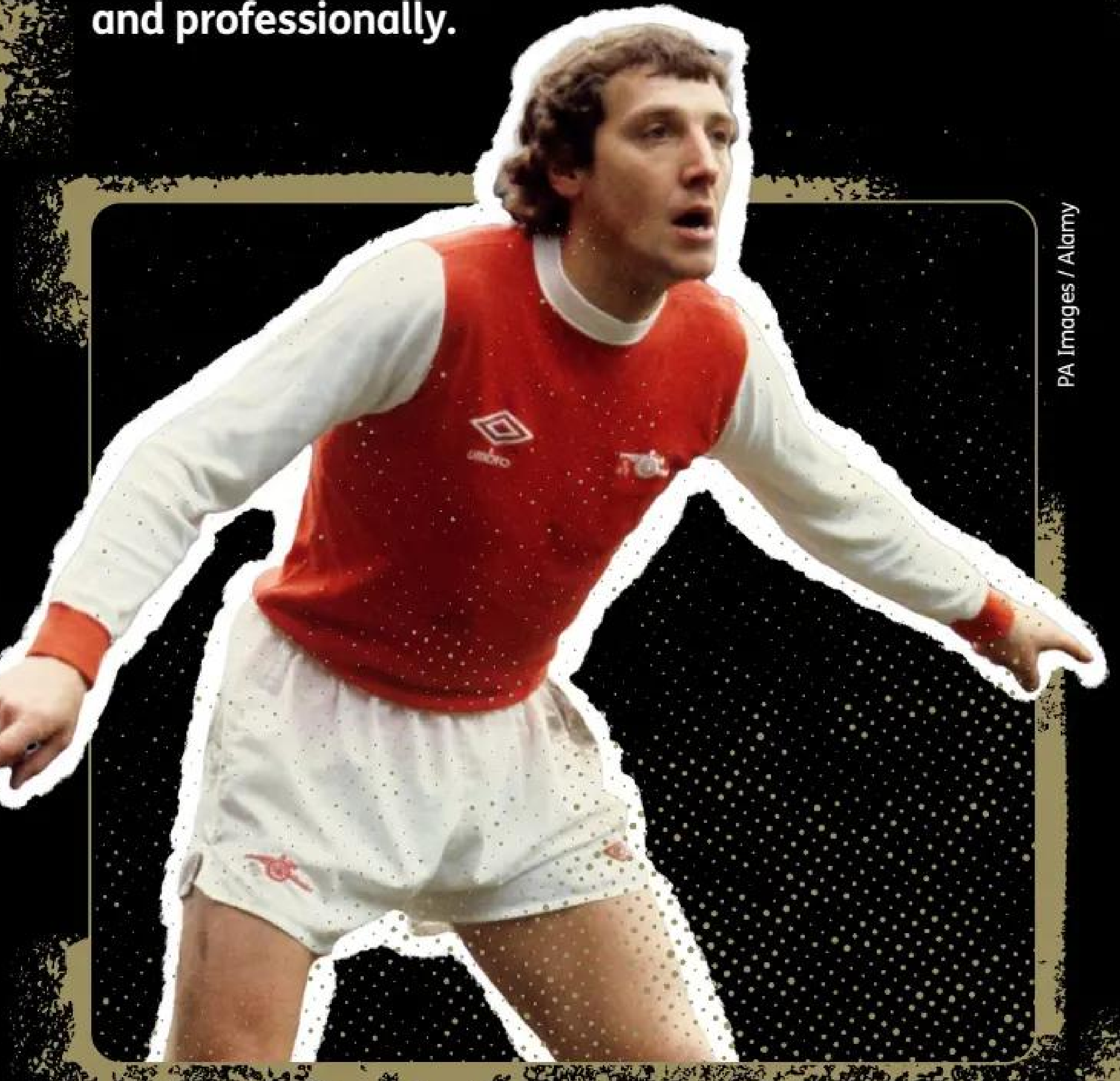
BACARY SAGNA

'Sacary Bagna' – as he was once called by Sky Sports commentator Chris Kamara – was a typical Arsène Wenger gem, plucked from relative obscurity at Auxerre to become one of the Premier League's finest defenders in no time at all. After seven years in N5, Sagna received his flowers, winning the FA Cup in his final game as a Gunner and embracing the manager who made it possible. He went down as a cult hero: and perhaps the Emirates era's greatest full-back.

SAMMY NELSON

Ask his team-mates and Sammy Nelson might just be the most memorable member of the dressing room, thanks to his pranks around Highbury. For such a jovial presence, however, Nelson was an old-school full-back, getting the crowd on-side with an early reducer and focusing on the defensive side of his job first.

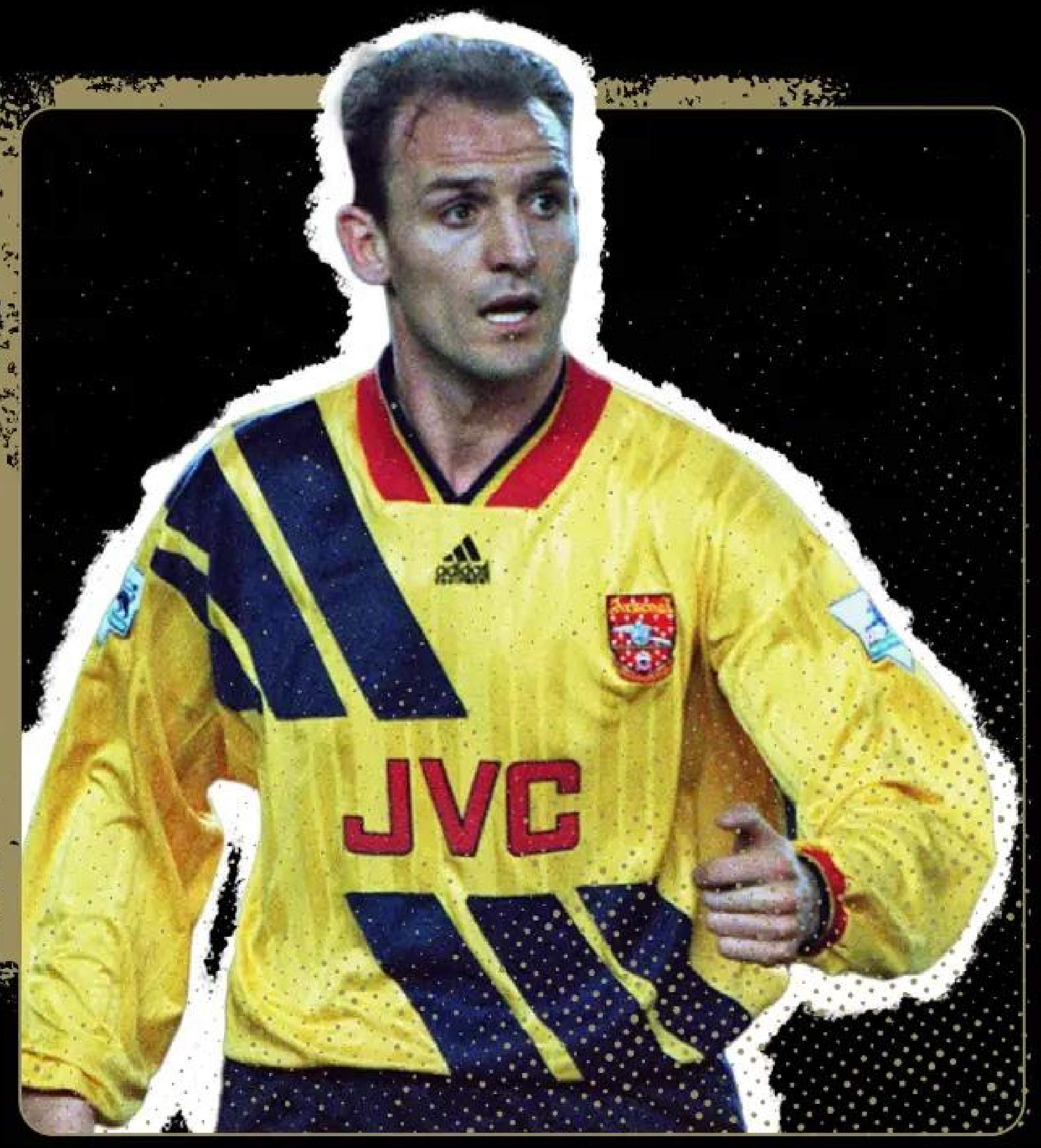
He capped off the 1970s with an FA Cup before leaving for Brighton: it was a fitting finish, given his huge contribution – both personally and professionally.



PA Images / Alamy

STEVE BOULD

Alongside every great defender is an equally capable one making them look even better. For Tony Adams, that was Steve Bould, his partner in crime and an incredibly underrated player who stepped in whenever needed: he was the third centre-back in George Graham's back three that won the title at Anfield – curiously, with the No.10 shirt on his back – and his stoic strength was a fixture throughout the 90s, with Arsène Wenger leaning on his powers, too.



ALLSTAR PICTURE LIBRARY / Alamy

Fox Photos / Getty

EDDIE HAPGOOD

England captain for the infamous 'Battle of Highbury' between the Three Lions and world champions Italy, Eddie Hapgood led his nation to a 3-2 win with a broken nose: they don't make them like that anymore. He was originally renowned as an elegant defender who matured into a powerhouse offering steel to Herbert Chapman's WM formation: he won seven major trophies, but his job was firmly to defend. He only scored two goals.

David Klein / Alamy

PER MERTESACKER

Per Mertesacker's dependability was typified in the 2017 FA Cup final: the German scored in the showpiece two seasons earlier but was parachuted in against Chelsea having been injured for the whole season. He put in a Man of the Match performance as Arsenal won their 13th FA Cup trophy, with Arsène Wenger later admitting to the BFG – that's 'Big Friendly German' – that he trusted him implicitly in those moments. He bowed out with his boss in 2018 and now runs the club's Hale End academy.

Images Getty, Alamy

LEAH WILLIAMSON

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
271

GOALS
16

FOUNDATION
for children

A modern-day legend of the women's game, Leah Williamson is the very heart of an Arsenal team writing history

Some footballers are always destined for greatness – and there's certainly a sense of that with Leah Williamson, seeing photos that the England captain has shared of her as a child in Arsenal shirts, meeting heroes like Alex Scott and Theo Walcott.

Young Williamson was in the Arsenal academy from the age of nine years old, making her debut for the Gunners at 17 and captaining the club at 18. As the women's game grows, she's stepped up to bigger roles, and was the captain of the Euro 2022-winning England side, representing Arsenal on an international stage: George Eastham was the only Gunner to ever win a trophy with England, prior to the triumph of Williamson, Beth Mead, Nikita Parris and Lotte Wubben-Moy.

Through injuries and offers elsewhere, Williamson has remained loyal. In Lisbon, in May 2025, it all became worth it, as Arsenal beat Barcelona to lift a second Champions League title. It would never have been possible without Williamson.

Arsenal
Fly Emirates
Arsenal
Fly Emirates

MEETING HER HEROES

Williamson's family were on holiday in Devon when she was given the opportunity to be an Arsenal mascot as a child – her mum made a 400-mile round trip so that the die-hard Gooner could live her dream. In the end, she got to meet her heroes – and would later replicate their success as a player for Arsenal herself.

adidas
Emirates
BETTER
RW

LEAH WILLIAMSON

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **29 MARCH 1997**

BIRTHPLACE: **MILTON KEYNES, ENGLAND**

NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**

HEIGHT: **170CM (5'7")**

POSITION: **DEFENDER**

YEARS: **2014-PRESENT**

NUMBER: **6**

STATS & RECORDS

3 PFA WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

17 YEARS AND A DAY AGE WHEN WILLIAMSON MADE HER SENIOR ARSENAL DEBUT

164 MOST WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

1x WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

2x WOMEN'S FA CUP

4x WOMEN'S LEAGUE CUP

1x UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Main image Alex Burstow / Getty **Boxout** David Price / Getty

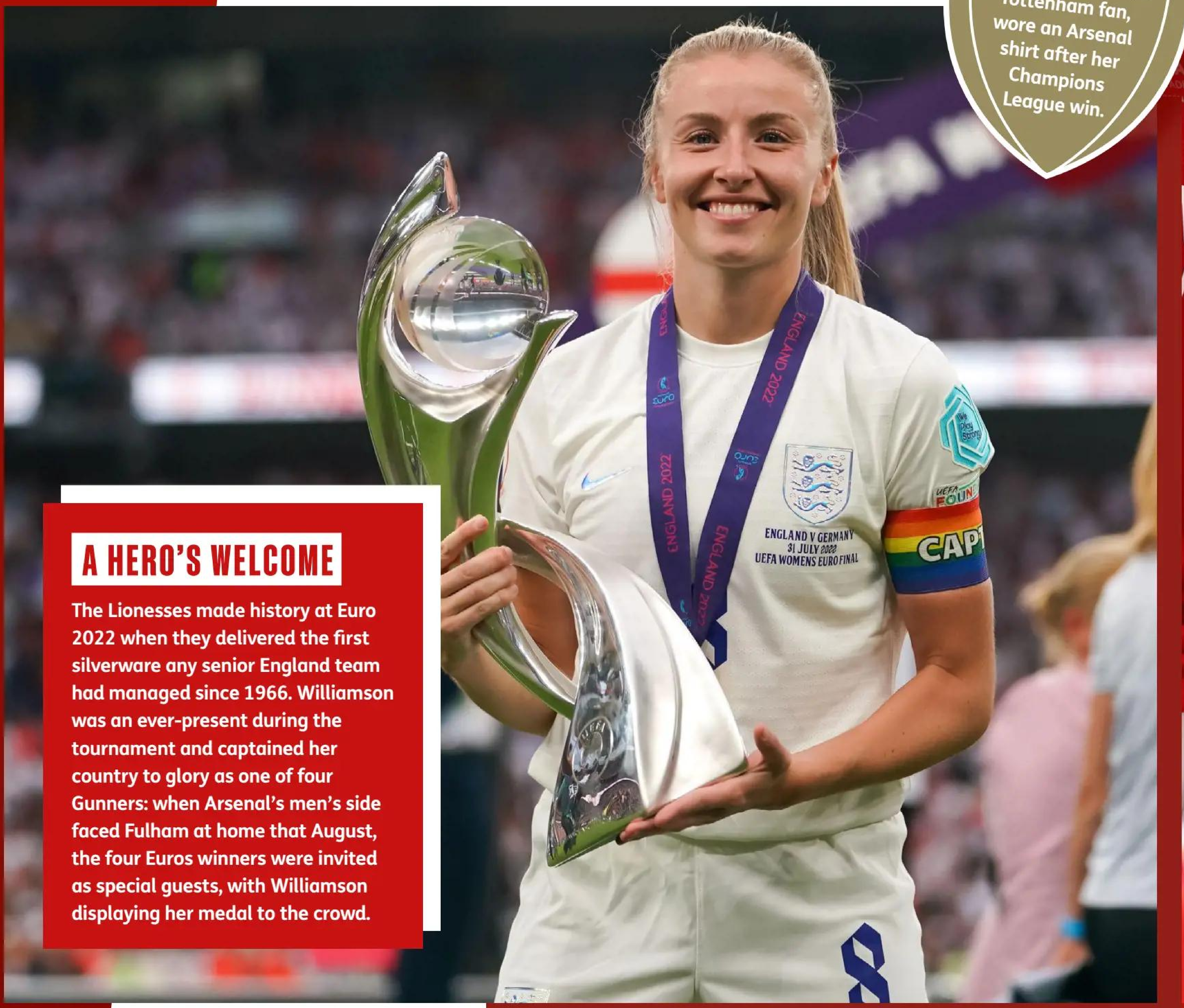
QUEEN OF THE WSL

In 2019, five years after her debut, Williamson won her first Women's Super League title with Arsenal. Only three players made more appearances that season than Williamson – she was a regular at the back for the Gunners and lost just two games all season. The centre-back made her 100th appearance for the club during the season, with England manager Phil Neville claiming that he had every confidence she would one day captain the Lionesses.

NurPhoto / Getty

FUN FACT

Williamson's dad, a Tottenham fan, wore an Arsenal shirt after her Champions League win.



Sports Press Photo / Alamy

A HERO'S WELCOME

The Lionesses made history at Euro 2022 when they delivered the first silverware any senior England team had managed since 1966. Williamson was an ever-present during the tournament and captained her country to glory as one of four Gunners: when Arsenal's men's side faced Fulham at home that August, the four Euros winners were invited as special guests, with Williamson displaying her medal to the crowd.

DID YOU KNOW? WILLIAMSON HAS AUTHORED TWO BOOKS AND BEEN GUEST EDITOR OF THE BEANO.

“WILLIAMSON PUT IN A MASTERCLASS IN DEFENCE”

Florencia Tan Jun - UEFA / Getty

ARSENAL’S LISBON LIONESS

Williamson had reportedly turned down a lucrative opportunity to head to Barcelona in the summer of 2024. A year later, she was the standout player in the Women’s Champions League final against the Blaugrana, putting in a masterclass in defence to lift Arsenal’s second trophy in the competition. The victory completed the set for Williamson, who had won all other club titles for Arsenal.

PATRICK VIEIRA

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
406
GOALS
33

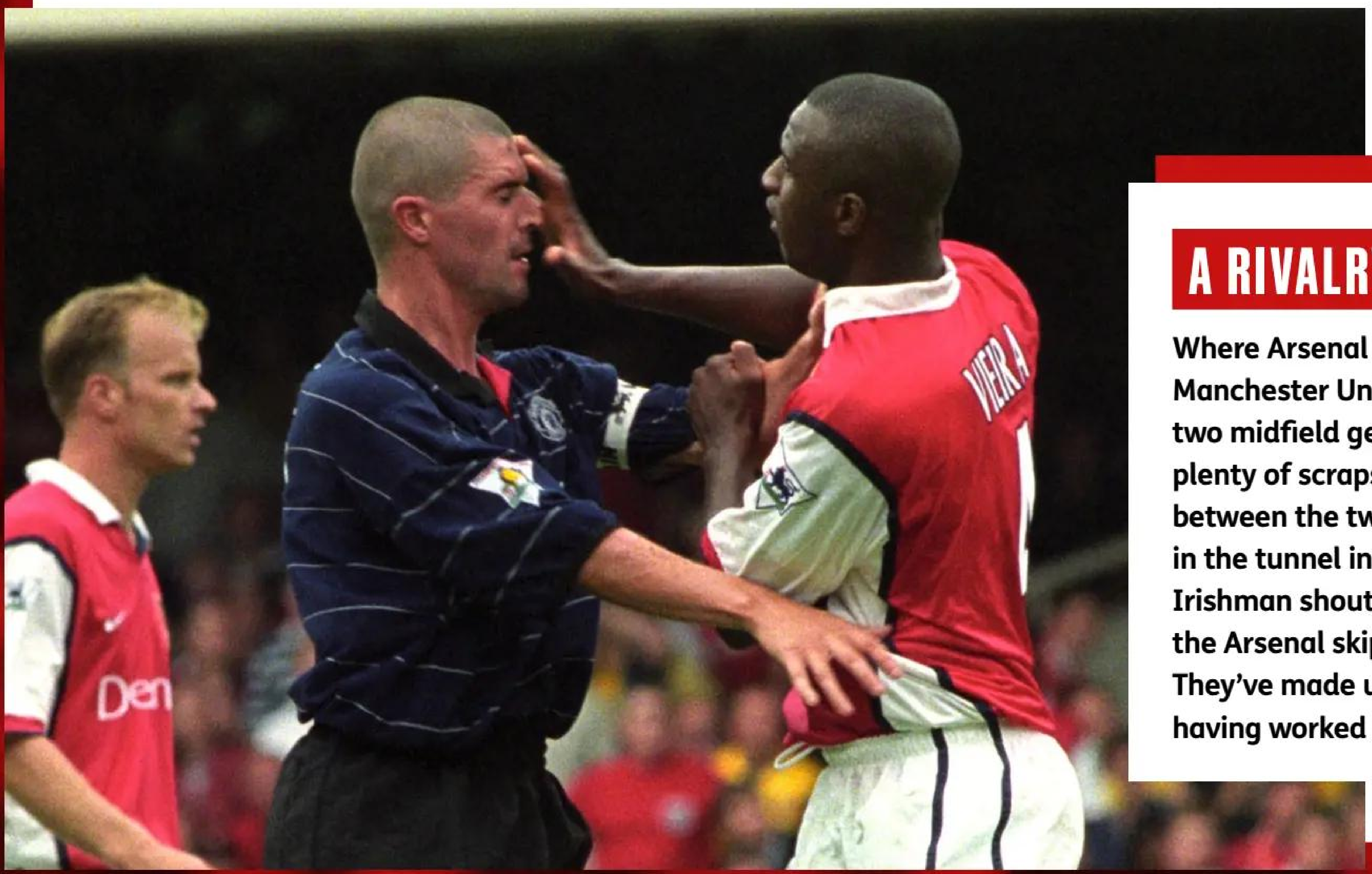
The captain of Arsenal's Invincibles, Patrick Vieira became one of the greatest-ever Premier League midfielders – and typified Arsène Wenger's style

Few had heard of Arsène Wenger when he first arrived in English football – even among the Arsenal players. But according to Ian Wright, Le Professeur won over his new squad by signing Patrick Vieira. He must know a good player when he sees one, reasoned Wrighty.

He certainly did in Vieira. A rangy box-to-box midfielder, six-foot, four-inch Vieira looked like a giant towering out of Highbury from the ground's famously low-angle cameras. He could do it all – tackle, pass, run and finish – and over time, he'd combine all of these talents to become a force of nature.

First, he established a relationship with Emmanuel Petit, then Gilberto Silva partnered Vieira in midfield. Overall, he was the beating heart behind two Doubles and an Invincible season, wrapping up the 2003-04 title with the final league goal – while his final Arsenal strike won the 2005 FA Cup final shootout.

Some say Arsenal never really replaced him. And how could you?

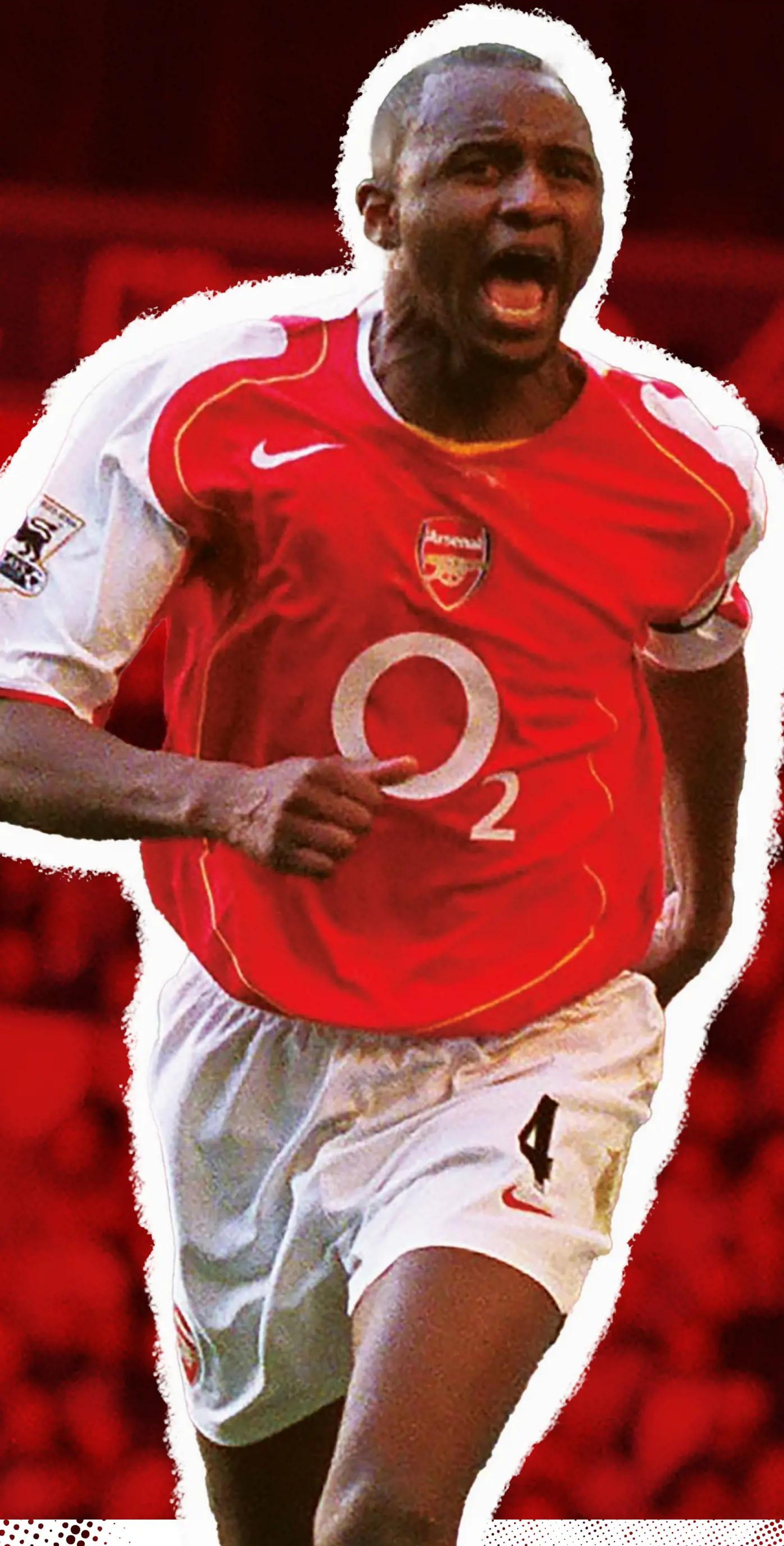


A RIVALRY WITH ROY

Where Arsenal had Vieira leading their team, Manchester United had Roy Keane, with the two midfield generals finding themselves in plenty of scraps over the years. The needle between the two simmered for years, exploding in the tunnel in 2005, when the cantankerous Irishman shouted, "I'll see you out there" to the Arsenal skipper during an argument. They've made up since, however, with both having worked together for ITV as pundits.

DID YOU KNOW? MANCHESTER UNITED UNSUCCESSFULLY TRIED TO SIGN VIEIRA IN MAY 2001.

PATRICK VIEIRA



BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **23 JUNE 1976**
BIRTHPLACE: **DAKAR, SENEGAL**
NATIONALITY: **FRENCH**
HEIGHT: **192CM (6'4")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1996-2005**
NUMBER: **4**

STATS & RECORDS

8 JOINT-MOST RED CARDS IN PREMIER LEAGUE HISTORY

6 PFA TEAM OF THE YEAR SELECTIONS

80 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN ALL COMPETITIONS FROM MIDFIELD

MAJOR HONOURS

3x PREMIER LEAGUE

4x FA CUP

FUN FACT

Vieira assisted club-mate Emmanuel Petit in the 1998 World Cup final for France.

Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Sean Dempsey / Alamy

KAI HAVERTZ

A former wonderkid turned towering centre-forward, Kai Havertz has led the line for Arsenal with decisive goals in big moments

Arsenal didn't appear to have a Kai Havertz-shaped hole in their team when they shelled out £65 million to sign him from rivals Chelsea in 2023. It was hard to know exactly where the German would fit.

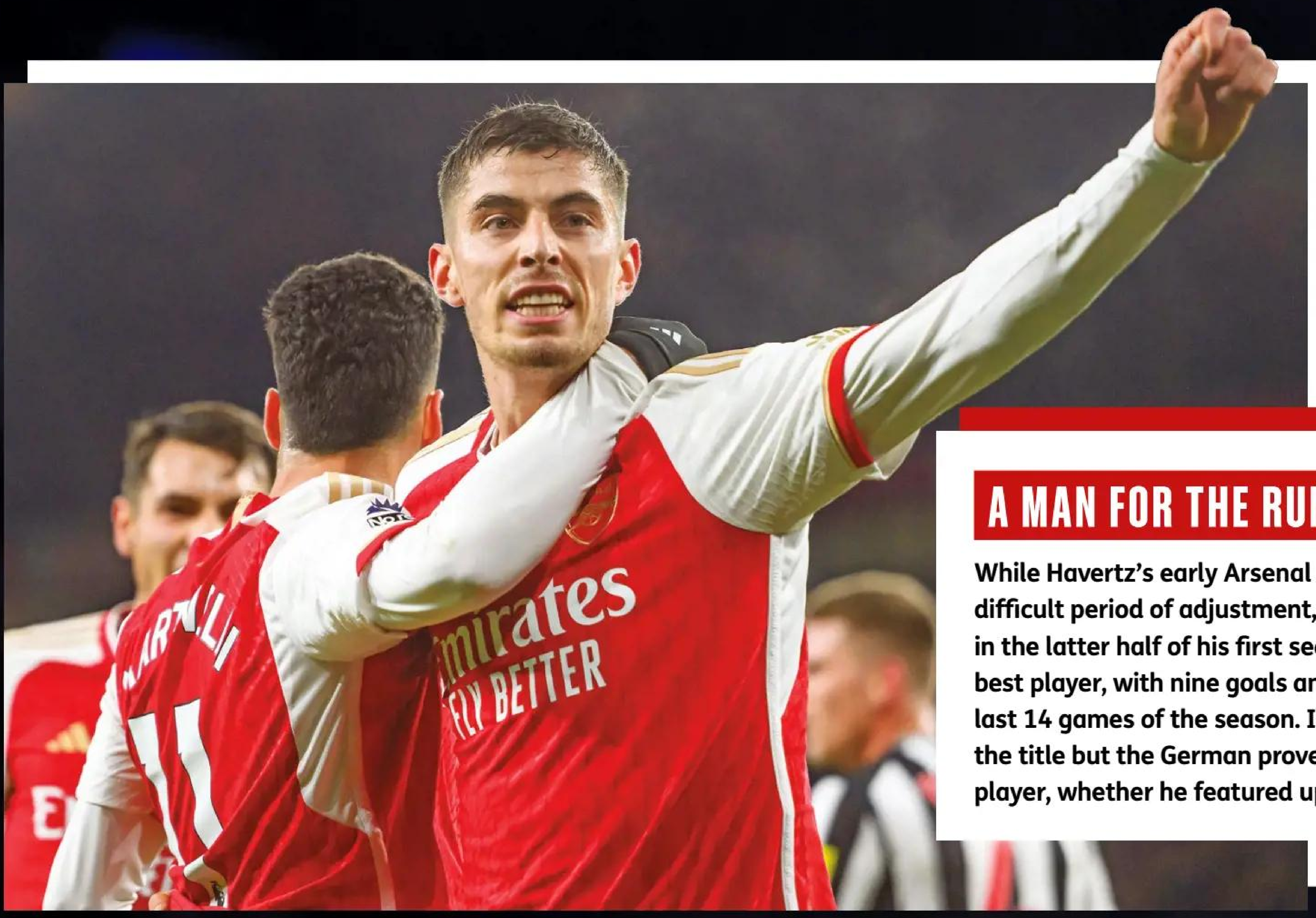
After struggling early on though, Martin Ødegaard gave Havertz a penalty to break his scoring drought against Bournemouth. From that moment, things thankfully started to fall into place, and Havertz went on to score and assist 16 times in 18 games up front for Arsenal.

The forward is a curious combination: he's a giant in attack with supreme aerial threat, but he has the footwork of a midfielder. Sure enough, he's become a pillar for Mikel Arteta, scoring against Tottenham, Manchester City, and former club Chelsea, in proving himself a man for the spotlight. Havertz is a valued member of the Gunners' attack, able to get the best out of those around him.

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
87

GOALS
29



A MAN FOR THE RUN-IN

While Havertz's early Arsenal form had been a difficult period of adjustment, he came into his own in the latter half of his first season as the Gunners' best player, with nine goals and seven assists in the last 14 games of the season. It wasn't enough to lift the title but the German proved himself to be a key player, whether he featured up front or in midfield.

DID YOU KNOW? ***HAVERTZ IS THE YOUNGEST PLAYER TO REACH 50 AND 100 LEAGUE APPEARANCES IN GERMANY.***

Emirates
FLY BETTER

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **11 JUNE 1999**
BIRTHPLACE: **AACHEN, GERMANY**
NATIONALITY: **GERMAN**
HEIGHT: **193CM (6'4")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **2023-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **29**

STATS & RECORDS

17 YEARS, 4 MONTHS, AND 6 DAYS OLD
AGE AT WHICH HAVERTZ BECAME THE YOUNGEST-EVER BUNDESLIGA PLAYER

21 PL GOALS AND ASSISTS IN 37 GAMES IN HIS DEBUT ARSENAL SEASON

3,827 MINUTES PLAYED IN ALL COMPETITIONS IN HIS FIRST SEASON FOR ARSENAL

FUN FACT

Havertz is a big fan of donkeys and even had one named after him at a Devon donkey sanctuary.

Main image Jacques Feeney/Offside / Getty **Boxout** Mark Pain / Alamy

“SMITH PROVIDED THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO GRAHAM’S TEAM”

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **21 NOVEMBER 1962**
BIRTHPLACE: **HOLLYWOOD, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **191CM (6’3”)**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **1987-95**
NUMBER: **9**

% STATS & RECORDS

2 FIRST DIVISION GOLDEN BOOT AWARDS

23 LEAGUE GOALS IN THE 1988-89 TITLE-WINNING CAMPAIGN

4 CONSECUTIVE SEASONS AS ARSENAL’S TOP SCORER

MAJOR HONOURS

- 2x FIRST DIVISION
- 1x FA CUP
- 1x LEAGUE CUP
- 1x UEFA CUP WINNERS’ CUP

FUN FACT

Smith provided his voice to the *FIFA* football video game series between 2011 and 2019.

DID YOU KNOW? SMITH SPENT THREE SEASONS AS GARY LINEKER'S STRIKE PARTNER WHILE AT LEICESTER CITY.

ALAN SMITH

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
347

GOALS
115

One of Arsenal's finest frontmen, 'Smudger' netted for fun, going down as a cult hero in North London

Alan Smith came up through the ranks with Leicester City in the early 1980s – and after he'd scored 84 goals in just over 200 appearances, George Graham decided he wanted to sign him. In transfer terms it was a tap-in, which was just how 'Smudger' liked it.

Smith's first season was solid, with 11 strikes in the league before he returned 25 in all competitions in his second campaign – including the first goal against Liverpool at Anfield to win the league. This was a team that before his arrival was lacking an obvious focal point – Smith provided the finishing touches to Graham's team.

He had several strike partners and combined with everyone with equal aplomb: first, the late, great Kevin Campbell, before Ian Wright arrived to bottle lightning.

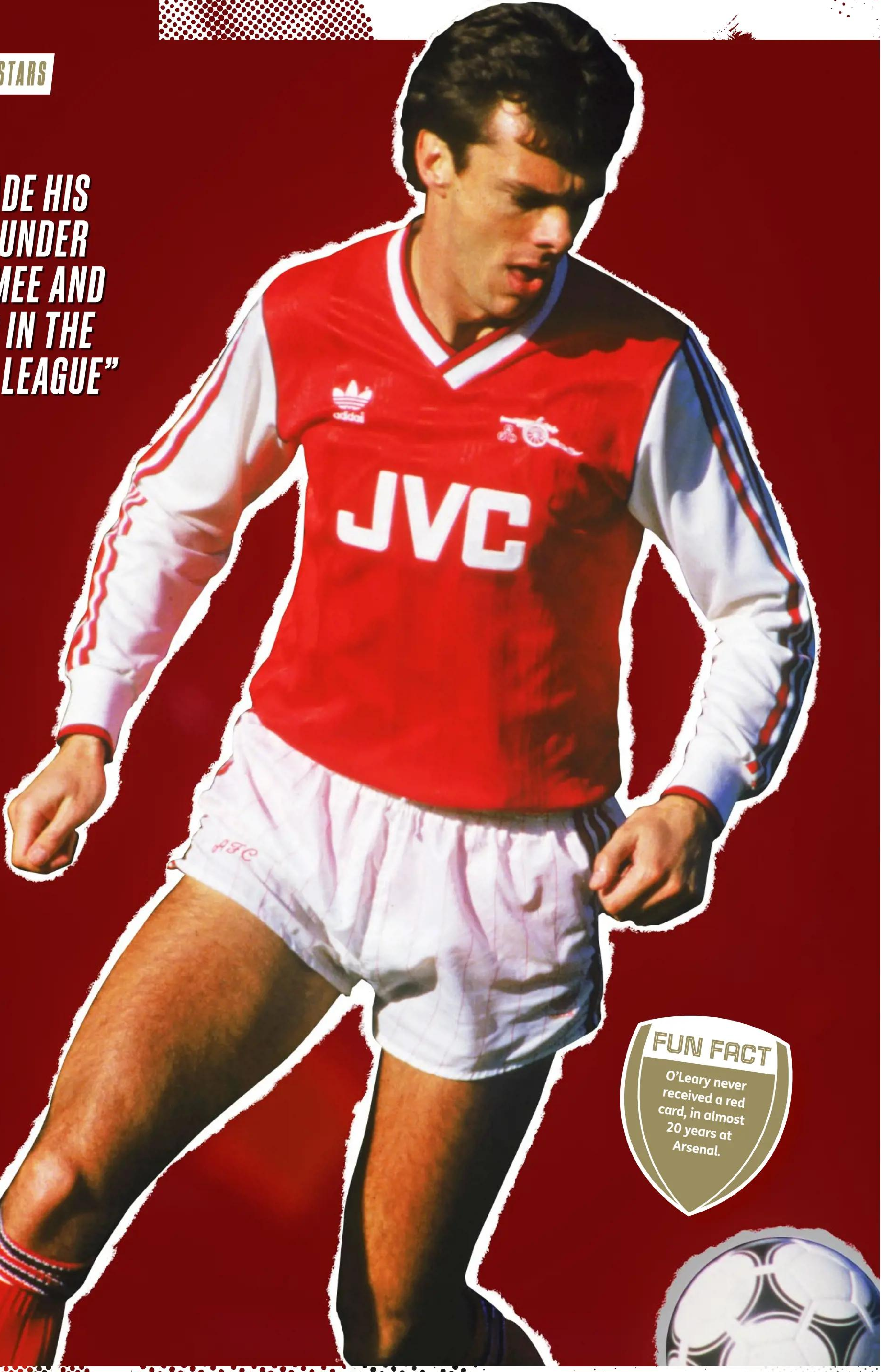
That Smith was only picked 13 times for England was a crying shame – especially compared to old mate, Gary Lineker – but in North London, he still has idol status.

THE CONQUEROR OF COPENHAGEN

With Wright suspended for the 1994 Cup Winners' Cup final against Parma, Smith led the line for Arsenal, with Tino Asprilla and Gianfranco Zola up front for the Serie A side. The Arsenal man had the beating of the Italian outfit, however, volleying a stunner with his favoured left foot after 20 minutes. It was enough to claim the trophy for the Gunners – their second European title after the European Fairs Cup victory in 1970.

Main image ALLSTAR PICTURE LIBRARY / Alamy **Boxout** Ross Kinnaird / Alamy

> "HE MADE HIS DEBUT UNDER BERTIE MEE AND PLAYED IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE"



FUN FACT

O'Leary never received a red card, in almost 20 years at Arsenal.

DID YOU KNOW? O'LEARY MANAGED ASTON VILLA AGAINST ARSENAL, IN THE LAST OF THE 49-GAME UNBEATEN RUN.

DAVID O'LEARY

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
722

GOALS
14

Arsenal's all-time appearance-maker, David O'Leary was a trusty figure at the heart of defence across three decades

There are some records at Arsenal that were always made to be broken. Thierry Henry admitted once that even the Invincibles would be eclipsed one day, adding, "But we can say, 'we were the first'."

David O'Leary's staggering 722 games for Arsenal, however, may never even come close to being beaten. His career spanned generations – he was a Gooner for the FA Cup triumph of 1979 and still in the squad when the club lifted the Cup again in 1993. He made his debut under Bertie Mee and still played in the Premier League era.

With Arsenal in his blood, O'Leary was born in London but grew up in Dublin, returning as a teenager after turning down terms with Manchester United. He would become a legend in N5 for his composure under pressure – but it's his incredible endurance that he became adored for. He left with an FA Cup and League Cup Double in 1993.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **2 MAY 1958**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **IRISH**
HEIGHT: **186CM (6'1")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1975-93**
NUMBER: **5**

STATS & RECORDS

558 MOST LEAGUE APPEARANCES FOR ARSENAL

10 SEASONS OF PLAYING 40+ GAMES

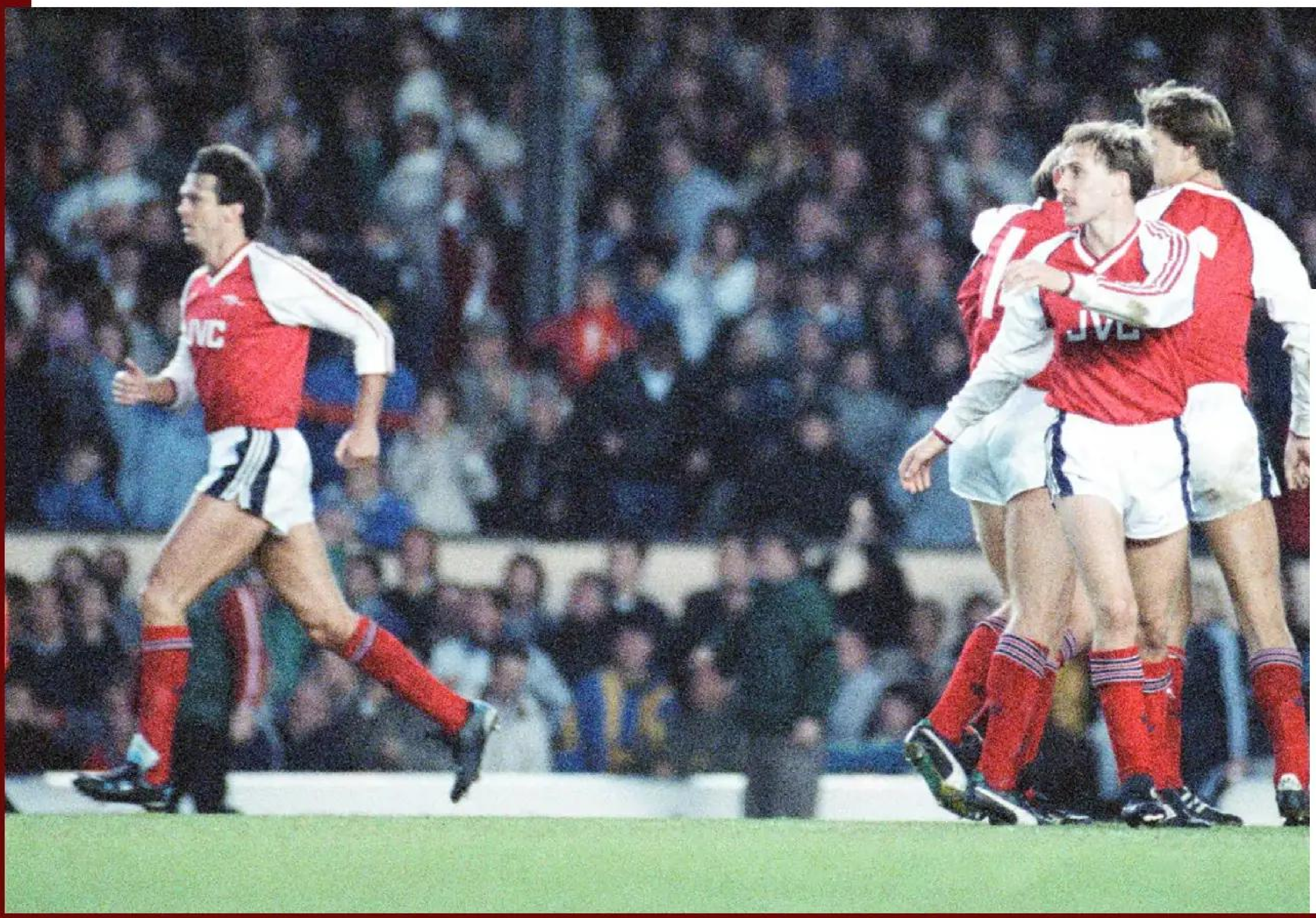
19 YEARS AND 8 MONTHS THE YOUNGEST PLAYER TO REACH 100 GAMES FOR ARSENAL

MAJOR HONOURS

2x FIRST DIVISION

2x FA CUP

2x LEAGUE CUP



A LONG-SERVING LEGEND

In Arsenal's 1989 win against Norwich City at Highbury, O'Leary wrote his name in the record books, passing George Armstrong's all-time record with a 622nd appearance for the Gunners. The Irish international didn't exactly pop up with many goals – 14, in all, less than once a season – but notched on his landmark afternoon to make it 3-3 before the Gunners found a winner. Now that's how to cap a milestone.

Main image David Cannon / Getty **Boxout** Mirrorpix / Alamy

FUN FACT

A devout Christian, Timber often posts Bible verses on social media before matches.

DID YOU KNOW? TIMBER HAS A TWIN BROTHER, QUINTEN, WHO CAPTAINS FEYENOORD IN THE NETHERLANDS.

JURRIËN TIMBER

Bouncing back from initial setbacks in North London, Jurriën Timber has become an integral member of the Gunners' team

As Premier League debuts go, Jurriën Timber's was one that he would want to forget. The Dutchman collapsed in a heap shortly after half-time and was later found to have suffered an anterior cruciate ligament tear.

It is testament to the strength of his character that Timber not only returned with vigour for his second season, but that he made 30 Premier League appearances, established himself as one of the best defenders in the world and played through the pain barrier towards the end of the season, with a niggling ankle injury.

A product of Ajax's famous academy, the Dutchman is fittingly a total footballer, capable of operating across the defence, able to tackle or carry the ball with equal gusto. He has added steel to the Gunners and has won the affections of plenty of fans for his all-action performances – not to mention the way he's dealt with adversity.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **17 JUNE 2001**
BIRTHPLACE: **UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS**
NATIONALITY: **DUTCH**
HEIGHT: **179CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2023-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **12**

STATS & RECORDS

48 GAMES PLAYED IN HIS SECOND SEASON BACK FROM A SERIOUS INJURY

7-1 THE SCORE AGAINST PSV WHEN TIMBER SCORED HIS FIRST CHAMPIONS LEAGUE GOAL FOR ARSENAL

3 POSITIONS PLAYED ACROSS THE DEFENCE IN THE 2024-25 SEASON: RIGHT-BACK, CENTRE-BACK AND LEFT-BACK

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
51
GOALS
2

ONCE A GOONER

Upon joining Arsenal, Timber revealed the Gunners were the one club he'd always wanted to play for and that he'd always been a fan of the club. "It was because of my brothers," the Dutchman said. "They were always Arsenal fans, and I just loved seeing Arsenal play. They had big players, the way they played, the style. I just love the club."

Main image Mark Pain / Alamy **Boxout** David Price / Getty

FUN FACT

McLintock influenced the kit change in the 60s, removing white sleeves. The design lasted only one season.

FOOTBALL CO. LTD

DID YOU KNOW? MCLINTOCK WAS ALWAYS A HUGE GOONER, HAVING A BOX AT HIGHBURY AND THEN THE EMIRATES.

FRANK MCLINTOCK

Frank McLintock was a commander through hard times and good, writing his name in history as Arsenal's first Double-winning captain

Arsenal paid a club-record fee for Frank McLintock. Yet four games into his Gunners career – and four straight losses – the Scot wondered what he'd let himself in for.

However, the Gunners were rejuvenated under Bertie Mee, with McLintock becoming a vital component and eventually taking the captaincy: he'd skipper the side to a historic FA Cup and league Double in 1971 and was voted FWA Footballer of the Year the same season as recognition of his individual contribution. He was short for a centre-back but McLintock still had a presence about him, with team-mates all looking up to the Scottish international as one of the leaders in the team.

McLintock was front and centre for some of the club's greatest-ever moments and rallied the team through some tougher times – even in retirement, he was a regular at Arsenal games as a fan. He was born in Glasgow, but McLintock's heart always belonged in North London.

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Arsenal have a rich history when it comes to league and cup Doubles, having won three in their history – and McLintock was the driving force behind the first. The defender was the on-field general, belting out instructions from the coaches, leading to his FWA Footballer of the Year award that season – and what better way to seal the haul than by beating Bill Shankly's Liverpool and Tottenham at White Hart Lane for the two trophies?

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
403

GOALS
32

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **28 DECEMBER 1939**
BIRTHPLACE: **GLASGOW, SCOTLAND**
NATIONALITY: **SCOTTISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **1964-73**
NUMBER: **5**

STATS & RECORDS

63 GAMES IN ALL COMPETITIONS IN THE DOUBLE-WINNING CAMPAIGN OF 1970-71

2 FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS – IN BOTH ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

4 THE FOURTH CAPTAIN OF A DOUBLE-WINNING SIDE, AND THE FIRST IN ARSENAL'S HISTORY

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FIRST DIVISION

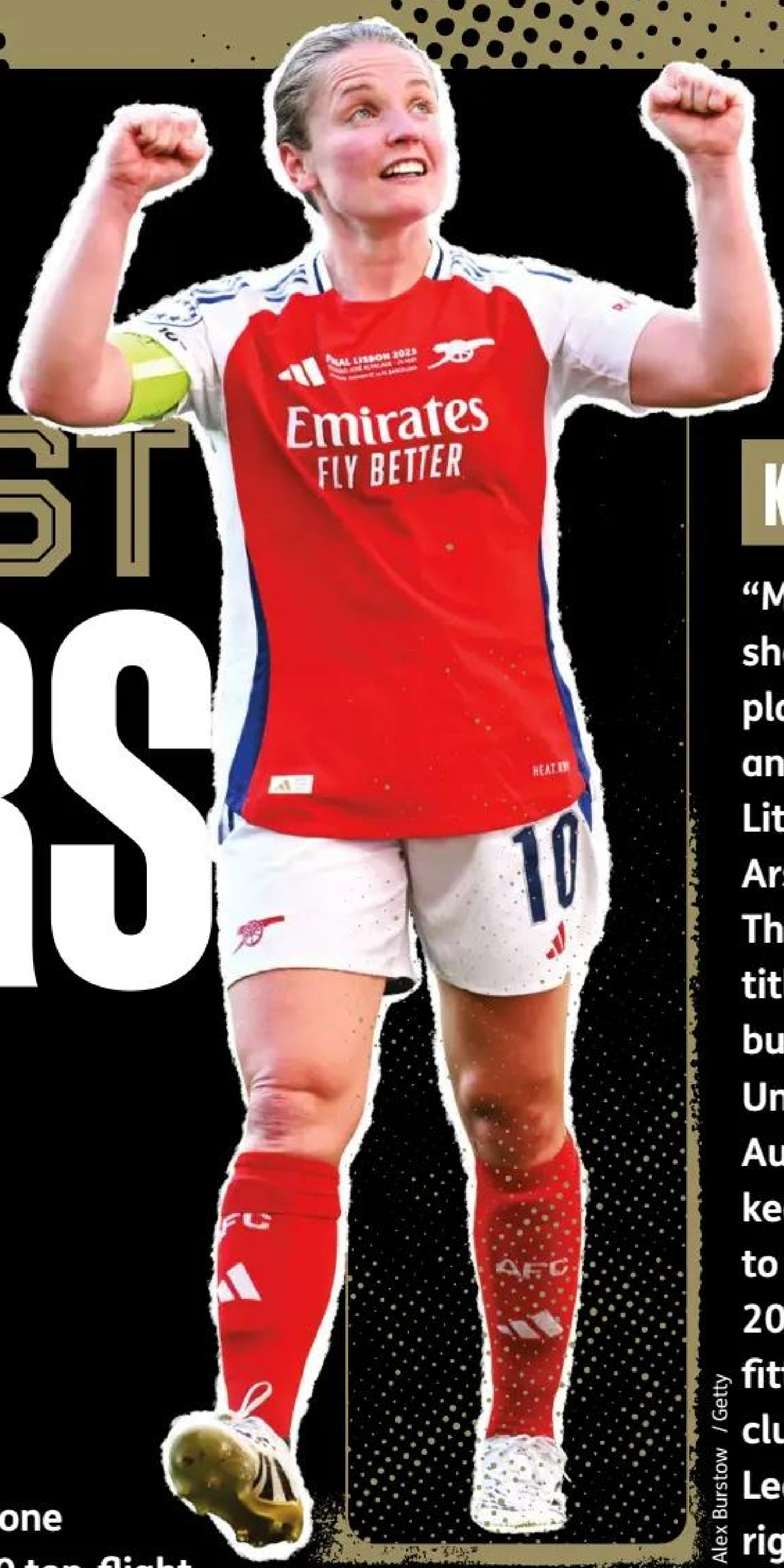
1x FA CUP

1x EUROPEAN FAIRS CUP

Main image Express / Getty **Boxout** Mirrorpix / Getty

BEST OF THE REST MIDFIELDERS

Deep in the engine room, you'll find top-class midfielders who made the Gunners tick



Alex Burstow / Getty

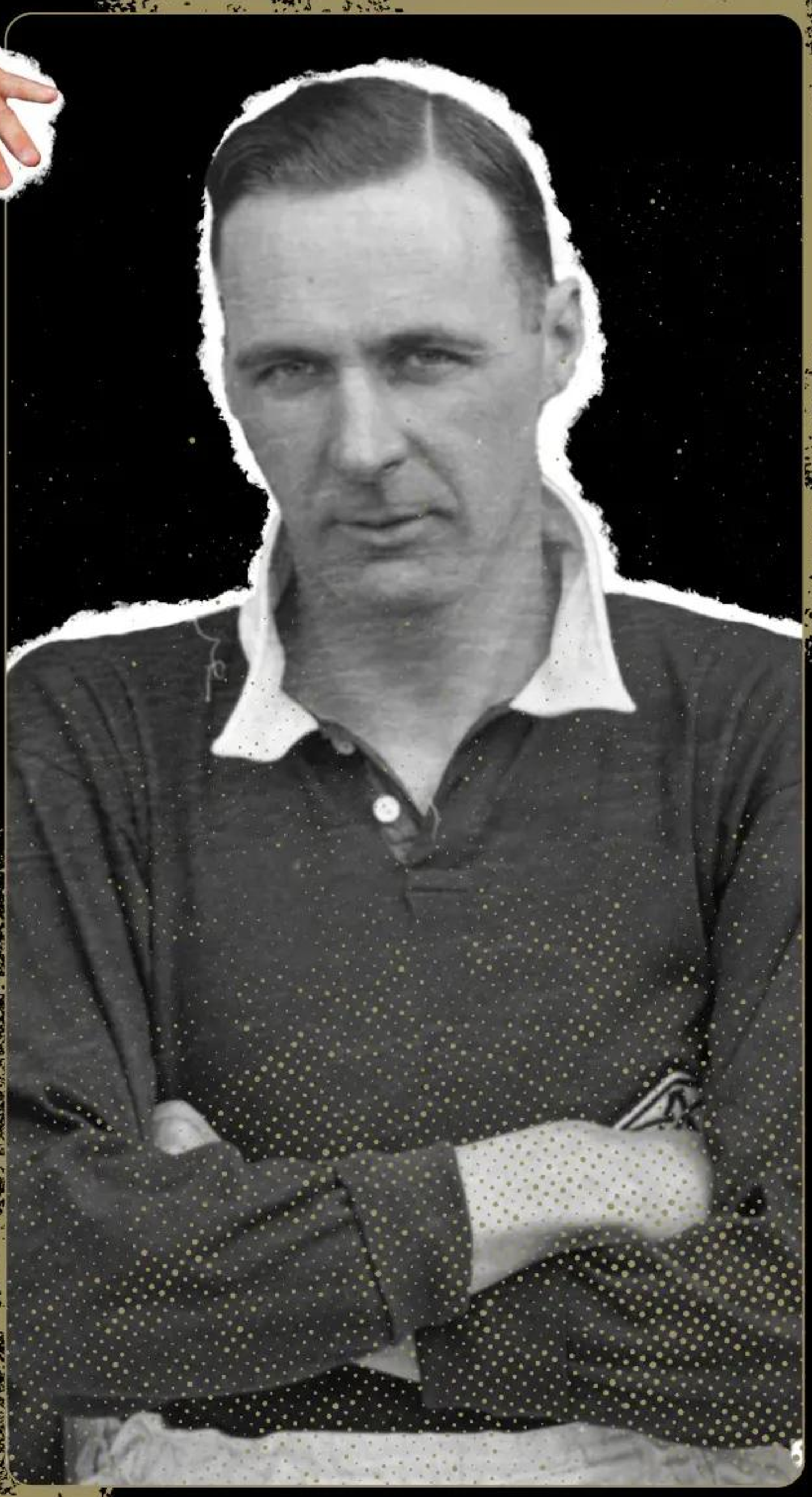
KIM LITTLE

"Make a note of this kid, she's going to be a big player," Vic Akers announced after Kim Little's debut goal for Arsenal against Chelsea. The Scot won four league titles and three FA Cups – but after stints in the United States and Australia, she just couldn't keep away and returned to the club once more in 2017. In 2025, it was fitting that she lifted the club's second Champions League title: Akers was right, wasn't he?

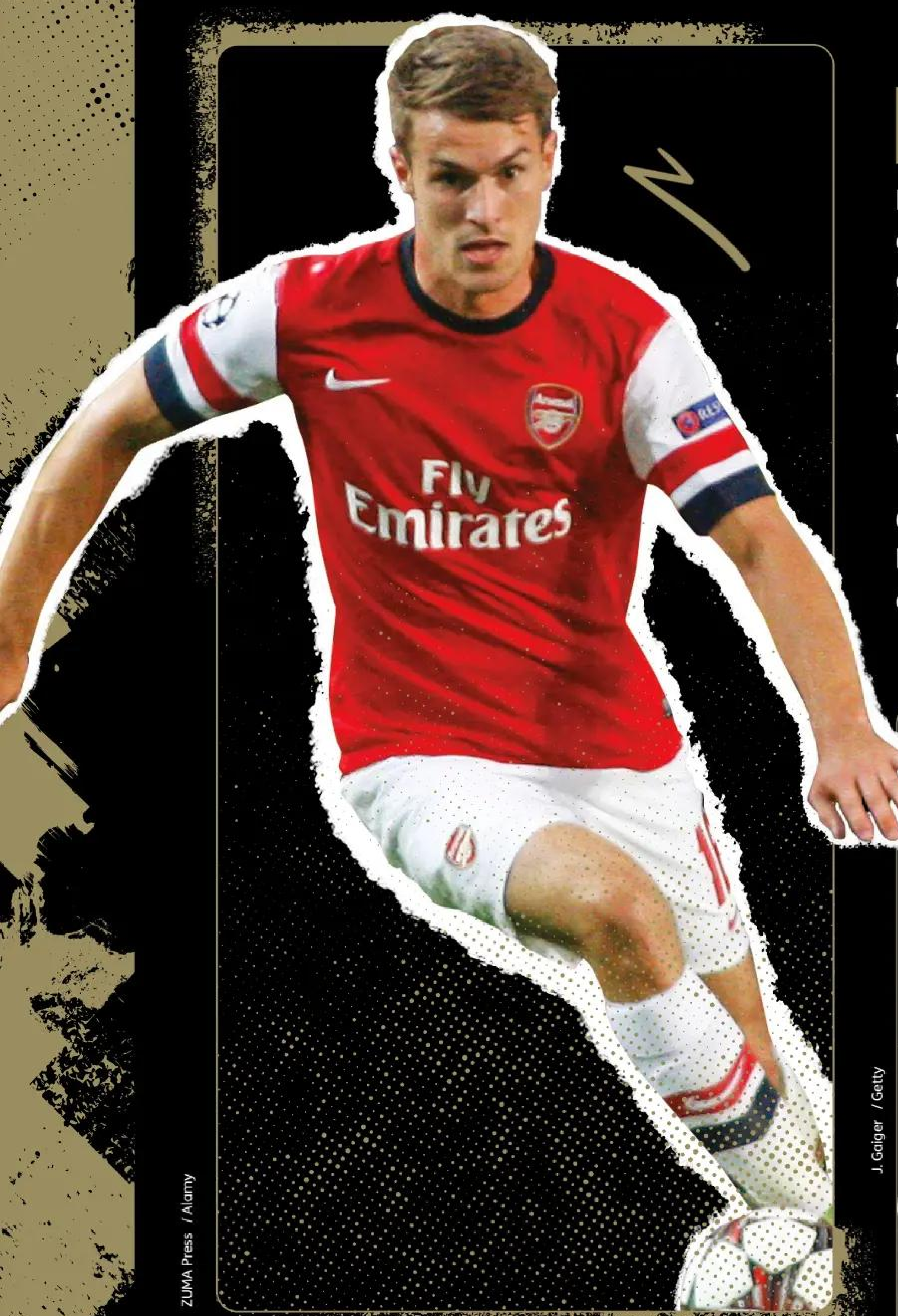
DAVID JACK

David Jack is in good company, as one of three players to have scored 100 top-flight goals for two different clubs (Bolton and Arsenal) along with Alan Shearer and Jimmy Greaves – and one of four to have been an all-time record transfer twice, along with Alf Common, Diego Maradona and Ronaldo.

It was money well spent. Jack kickstarted the Chapman era: he won Arsenal's first FA Cup and lifted three titles within just six seasons, retiring as a legend of Highbury's Marble Halls.



J. Gaiger / Getty



ZUMA Press / Alamy

AARON RAMSEY

Whether launching piledrivers in the Champions League, scoring in North London Derbies or FA Cup finals, Aaron Ramsey was always the man for the big occasion, combining his tireless stamina with an eye for the spectacular. That he reached such levels was an achievement in itself, too, after a horrific leg break at Stoke early in his career. Ramsey came back stronger, developed into a pivotal player for Arsenal and never let the team down.

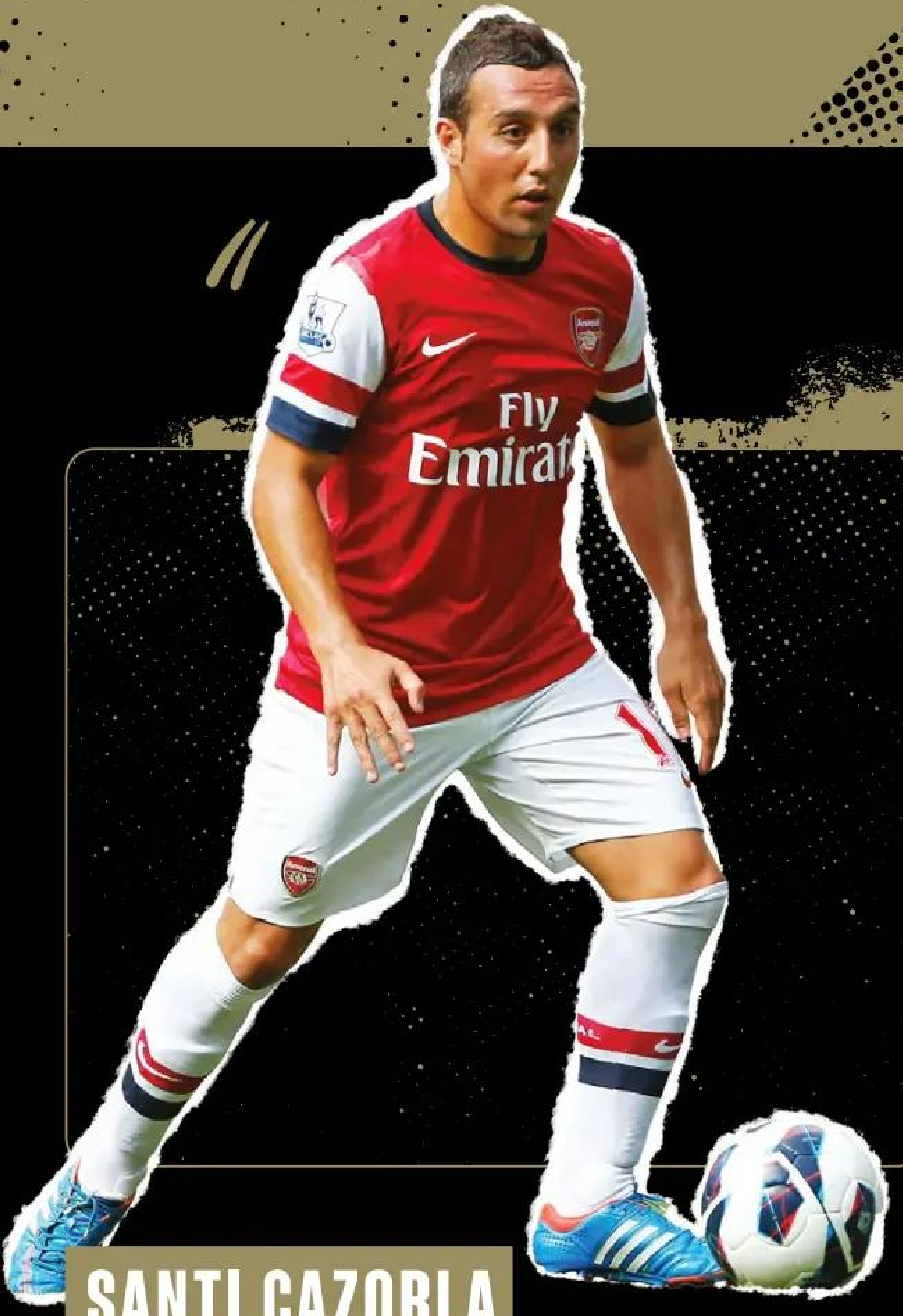
Peter Robinson / Alamy

GEORGE ARMSTRONG

If there's one player from Bertie Mee's era who may have fitted into the modern Arsenal side, George Armstrong had a strong case. Versatile, with pinpoint accuracy in the cross, he was also an adept set-piece taker.

The 1971 Double winners owed plenty to the star's hard-running and electric output: but 'Geordie' would also break the club record for the most appearances of anyone in red-and-white. Highbury could set its iconic clock by him.

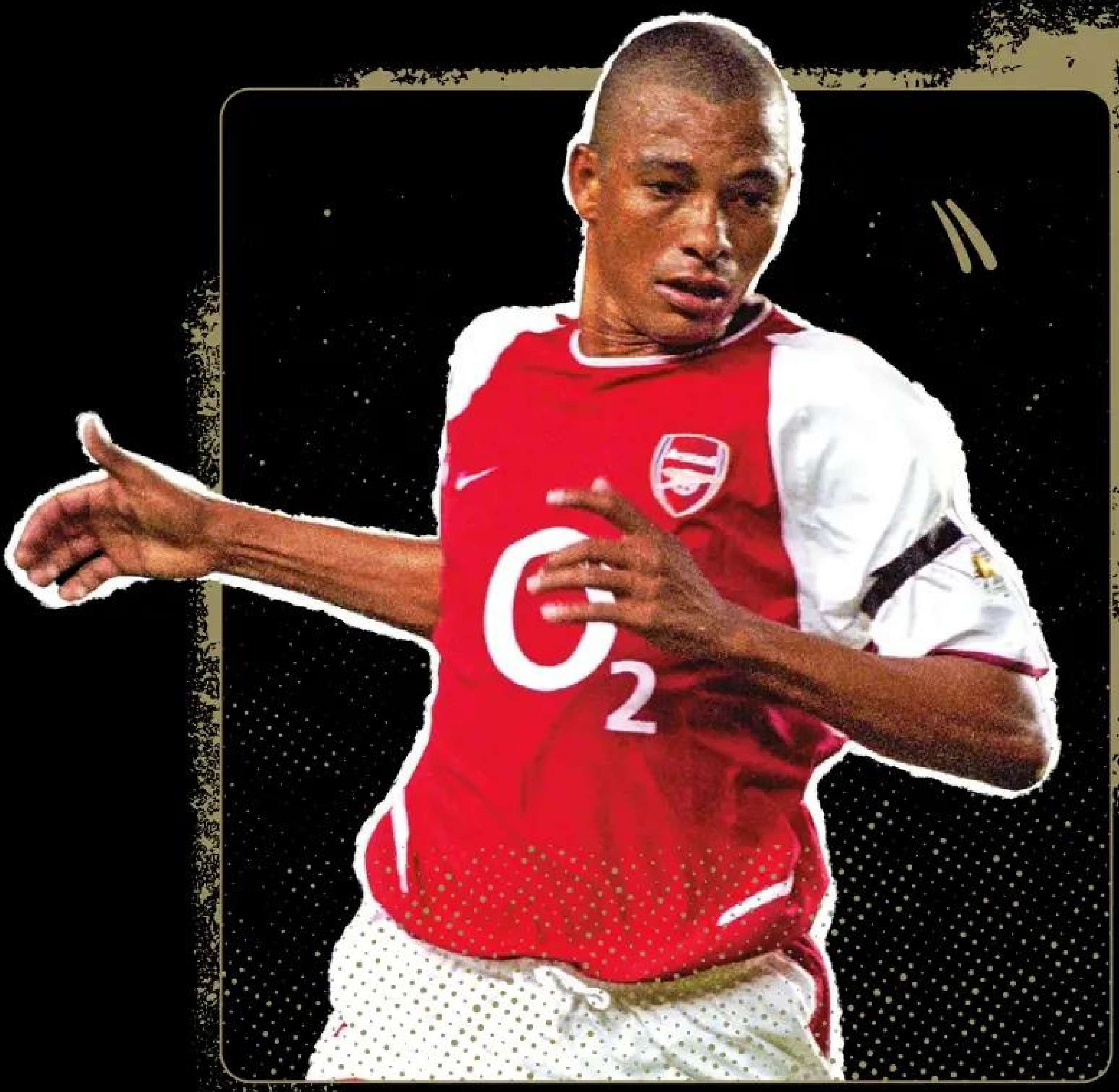
BEST OF THE REST: MIDFIELDERS



David Klein / Alamy

SANTI CAZORLA

Santi Cazorla brought a brand of magic to Arsenal. He was so two-footed that he could take corners with both feet, he could weave between defenders with ease and he could strike the ball with venom – as seen with his fantastic strike in the 2014 FA Cup final. But as much as his ability, Cazorla was loved for the smile he played with. The Spaniard simply lived to play football – and was loved for it in return.



Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

GILBERTO SILVA

You'd be forgiven for watching Brazil at the 2002 World Cup and not noticing Gilberto Silva amid the samba stars. That was exactly how he wanted it.

The midfielder arrived at Highbury with the same MO, breaking up play with discretion and keeping the team ticking over. He became imperative to Arsène Wenger, using his magnificent reading of the game to become an unsung hero: and he's the only Gunner to have an anteater named after him at London Zoo.

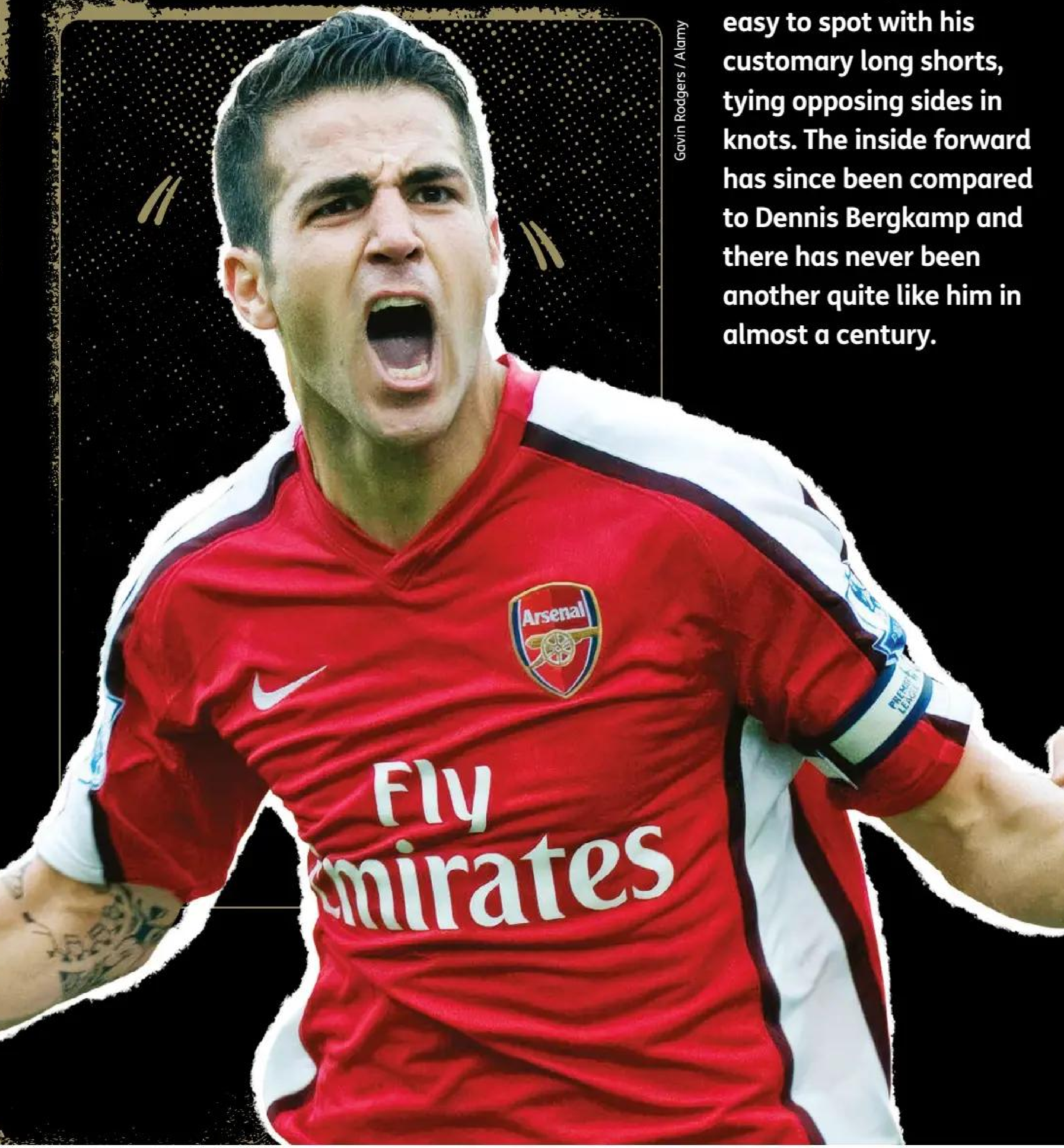
BRIAN TALBOT

Brian Talbot's key contribution came with a goal against Manchester United in the FA Cup final in 1979, making him the first player to win back-to-back finals with different teams – but he wasn't just a man for big games. In the 1979-80 season, Talbot played all 70 matches, marking himself out as one of the first names on the team sheet: he worked harder than anyone, and was a perfect foil for the flair players. Every team needs a Talbot.

Peter Robinson / Alamy

CESC FÀBREGAS

Arsenal were physical in Arsène Wenger's early days – but though Cesc Fàbregas was diminutive, he was so good that he made the Frenchman change his entire philosophy. Soon, the Catalan was given free rein in midfield, taking Patrick Vieira's role and captaincy in time, controlling the Gunners' heartbeat. He left before winning a major trophy as captain – and tainted his reputation with fans by joining Chelsea – but he remains one of the most influential players in Premier League history.



Gavin Rodgers / Alamy

GEORGE GRAHAM

George Graham was originally a striker – and a decent one at that. But Bertie Mee had a vision for the Scot to make him a top-class midfielder. 'Stroller' could control proceedings from the centre of the pitch, still chipping in with goals: there, he would become the creative core of the team, putting in a Man of the Match shift in the 1971 FA Cup final, and developing the footballing intelligence that he'd become known for in the dugout.

Mirrorpix / Alamy

ALEX JAMES

In a loophole to get around the maximum wage in football, Alex James was employed by department store Selfridges as a "sports demonstrator": he really was Arsenal's first real superstar. And despite the fact that he didn't often score, as the conductor of the orchestra, James was easy to spot with his customary long shorts, tying opposing sides in knots. The inside forward has since been compared to Dennis Bergkamp and there has never been another quite like him in almost a century.

Mirrorpix / Getty

DENNIS BERGKAMP

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES
423
GOALS
120

Graceful, prolific and always a man for big moments, Dennis Bergkamp's legacy in North London is as unique as he is

Dennis Bergkamp's statue at Arsenal is of him in midair – ironic, given his fear of flying. It captures the Dutchman controlling a ball perfectly as it floats over his shoulder, with the deftness to take possession under his spell.

While most strikers are extroverts, showmen of speed or power – see Ian Wright or Thierry Henry, respectively – Bergkamp was a man of quiet finesse. Every goal he scored was a masterpiece, as evidenced by the August 1997 Goal of the Month competition on *Match of the Day*, in which he was voted first, second and third. No one has done it since – just as no one has ever replicated his iconic twist-and-shoot goal against Newcastle.

Bergkamp scored over 100 goals for Arsenal, but he's loved because of how he played the game. A true artist, he inspired joy with the way he played football – and that's what Arsène Wenger's Arsenal was all about.

> "A TRUE ARTIST, HE INSPIRED JOY WITH THE WAY HE PLAYED FOOTBALL"

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: 10 MAY 1969
BIRTHPLACE: AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
NATIONALITY: DUTCH
HEIGHT: 183CM (6'0")
POSITION: FORWARD
YEARS: 1995-2006
NUMBER: 10

STATS & RECORDS

2 BBC GOAL OF THE SEASON AWARDS

181 GOAL INVOLVEMENTS FOR ARSENAL IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE

4 JOINT-MOST ASSISTS IN A SINGLE PREMIER LEAGUE GAME

MAJOR HONOURS

3x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

FUN FACT

Bergkamp's parents named him after Scottish football legend, Denis Law.

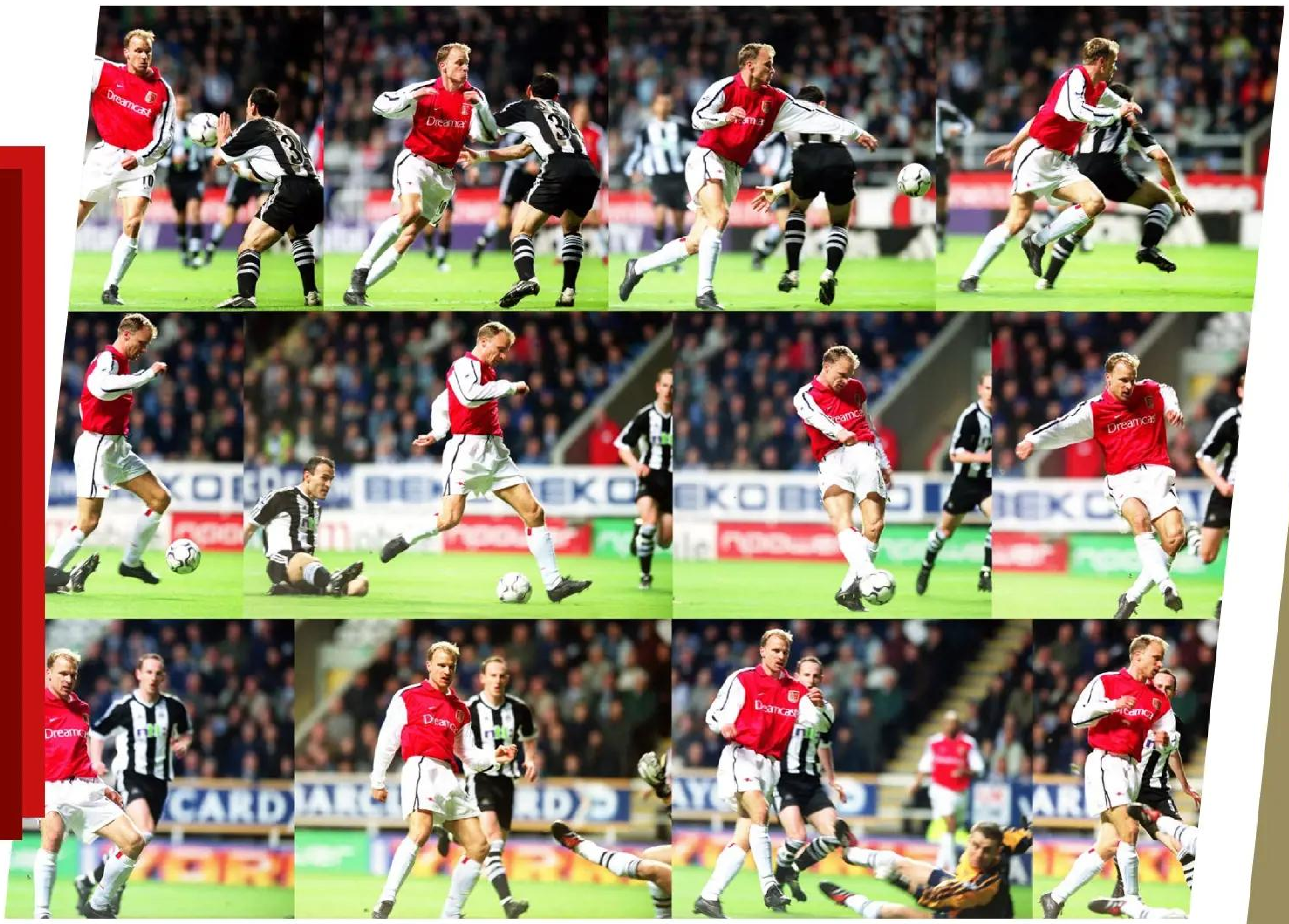
OUTFOXING THE FOXES

Bergkamp's first hat-trick for Arsenal, struck against Leicester City in 1997, is one of the most iconic in Premier League history. While the Dutchman's third goal was lauded as the best – a deft touch before sorting his feet and arrowing the ball into the net – all three were excellent, with Foxes manager Martin O'Neill marvelling it was the greatest hat-trick he'd ever seen.

Main image Stuart MacFarlane / Getty **Boxout** Mark Thompson / Getty

TWIST AND SHOOT

Bergkamp's 2002 goal against Newcastle is considered by many to be the greatest Premier League goal of all time. While it's his control from earlier in the match that was made into a statue, his goal was a unique moment where he flicked the ball around Nikos Dabizas before scoring. "You can't blame anyone for that," Toon boss Bobby Robson said afterwards. "You just have to accept that Bergkamp did a beautiful thing."



Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

DENNIS BERGKAMP DAY

With the Dutchman retiring from football at the end of the 2005-06 season, Highbury celebrated 'Dennis Bergkamp Day' against West Brom that season, donning orange for the occasion to pay tribute to their hero. Bergkamp captained the team to a win that day, and of course, capped the afternoon with a goal. It got the biggest cheer at the ground all season.

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

DID YOU KNOW? ONE OF BERGKAMP'S FOOTBALLING HEROES GROWING UP WAS ENGLISH STAR GLENN HODDLE.

A TESTIMONIAL OPENING

The first game at the Emirates Stadium was in honour of Bergkamp: a testimonial to celebrate his career, with the stars on show at Arsenal's new ground. Henry, Wright, Patrick Vieira and even Johan Cruyff were all out on the pitch, as Arsenal won 2-1 and Bergkamp took kick-off with his father, Wim, in an emotional start to the ground's life.

FUN FACT

Bergkamp met Ian Wright by chance at a petrol station shortly after signing for Arsenal.

Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

DID YOU KNOW? LIVERPOOL SIGNED THOMAS FROM ARSENAL – PERHAPS TO STOP HIM SNATCHING THE LEAGUE FROM THEM AGAIN.

MICHAEL THOMAS

Michael Thomas was a man in the right place at the right time, scoring perhaps Arsenal's most iconic goal ever

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
208

GOALS
30

TV commentator Brian Moore's enduring words, "It's up for grabs now," in the dying embers of the 1988-89 season still raise the hairs on the back of Gooners' necks. It was Michael Thomas who made sure why.

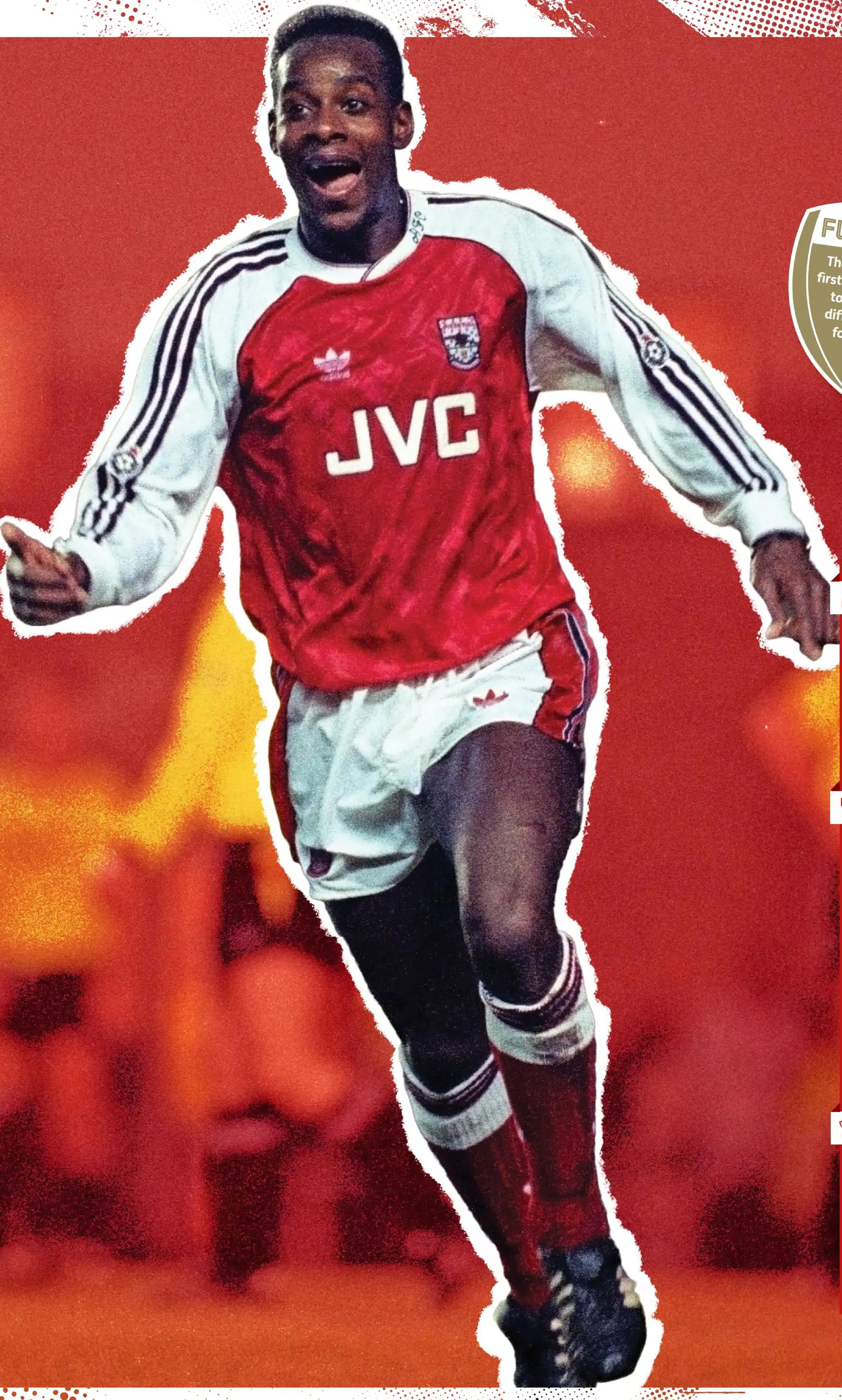
The midfielder grew up as a Spurs fan, but by the time he made his debut against the Lilywhites, he was Arsenal through and through. Thomas was one of the rising talents that George Graham trusted to instil pace and directness into his team and over the course of seven years, he popped up in multiple positions, offering energy in midfield or at full-back.

By the time that Liverpool fixture came around, he was a firm favourite – and Thomas was the man that you'd want a last-gasp chance to fall to. Has there ever been an Arsenal player so cool? The moment was immortalised in the novel *Fever Pitch* – and its cinematic retelling – and is still revered today.

"THOMAS, CHARGING THROUGH THE MIDFIELD..."

The most dramatic moment in English league history, the greatest ending to a season ever – and, for some, the most iconic. Liverpool simply weren't beaten at Anfield, let alone with a title on the line, yet when the clock ticked over into stoppage time and the ball landed with Thomas, the midfielder wrote his name in Arsenal folklore, scoring the goal that ended Arsenal's 18-year wait for a league championship in style and sending Arsenal's fans wild.

Candy
Candy
Candy
JVC



FUN FACT

Thomas was the first Arsenal player to play at five different levels for England.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **24 AUGUST 1967**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **175CM (5'9")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **1984-91**
NUMBER: **4**

STATS & RECORDS

78 SECONDS - THOMAS'S TITLE-WINNING GOAL WAS SCORED WITH JUST 78 SECONDS OF THE 1988-89 SEASON REMAINING

19 YEARS, 5 MONTHS, AND 15 DAYS - THOMAS'S AGE ON HIS DEBUT IN A NORTH LONDON DERBY

1971 THE LAST TIME ARSENAL HAD WON THE LEAGUE PRIOR TO THOMAS'S GOAL

MAJOR HONOURS

2x FIRST DIVISION

1x LEAGUE CUP

Main image Mark Leech/Offside / Getty **Boxout** Paul Marriott / Alamy

SOL CAMPBELL

Arsenal's own Sol man became a legend at White Hart Lane – for all the wrong reasons, according to Spurs fans

ARSENAL CAREER
APPEARANCES 211
GOALS 12

For those brought up in the era of Twitter and Fabrizio Romano, there's simply no explaining quite how shocking Sol Campbell's move from Tottenham to Arsenal really was. The Gunners landed their biggest rival's captain for absolutely nothing... and no one had any idea before he was unveiled by a beaming Arsène Wenger.

The England centre-back would play alongside Tony Adams to win a Double in 2002 before leading the defence to an unbeaten title two years later, a young Kolo Touré by his side. In 2006, he'd score in a Champions League final.

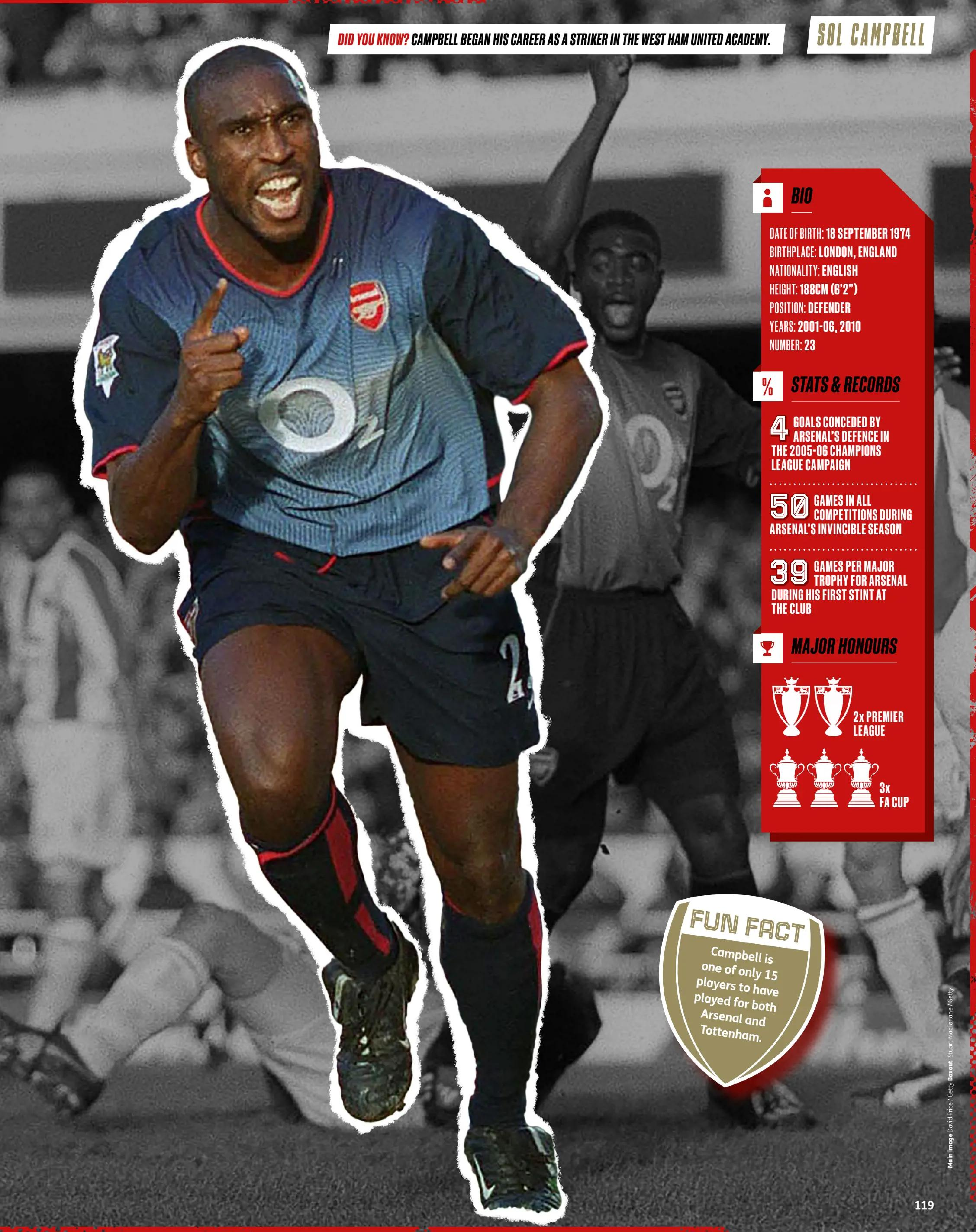
He was a complete defender: pacy, strong and composed. He had nerves of steel: well, that was a given, after vice-chairman David Dein convinced him to make the move across North London. It paid off in April 2004, with Campbell winning the title at White Hart Lane, of all places. Has there ever been a sweeter signing in Premier League history?

EUROPEAN HERO

Arsenal's 2005-06 Champions League season wasn't to be, with Barcelona beating the Gunners in Paris – but Campbell was a rock defensively all season long. Arsenal broke a record for ten consecutive games without conceding, which owed plenty to Campbell and keeper Jens Lehmann as the experienced heads in an injury-ravaged backline. In the final, Campbell even struck the goal to put Arsenal ahead, proving himself the man for the big moments.

DID YOU KNOW? CAMPBELL BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A STRIKER IN THE WEST HAM UNITED ACADEMY.

SOL CAMPBELL



BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **18 SEPTEMBER 1974**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **188CM (6'2")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2001-06, 2010**
NUMBER: **23**

STATS & RECORDS

4 GOALS CONCEDED BY ARSENAL'S DEFENCE IN THE 2005-06 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE CAMPAIGN

50 GAMES IN ALL COMPETITIONS DURING ARSENAL'S INVINCIBLE SEASON

39 GAMES PER MAJOR TROPHY FOR ARSENAL DURING HIS FIRST STINT AT THE CLUB

MAJOR HONOURS

2x PREMIER LEAGUE

3x FA CUP

FUN FACT

Campbell is one of only 15 players to have played for both Arsenal and Tottenham.

Main image David Price / Getty **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

DID YOU KNOW? WHITE IS A DOG PERSON AND OFTEN TAKES ARSENAL'S LABRADOR, NAMED 'WIN', HOME FROM TRAINING.

BEN WHITE

ARSENAL CAREER

APPEARANCES
160

GOALS
6

With the stamina of a long-distance runner and the strength of a boxer, Ben White is a true modern-day defender

Ben White is a manager's dream: he trains with relentless intensity, never drops anything less than an excellent performance and gets on with his job without any fuss.

White was originally signed as a centre-back but with Mikel Arteta integrating William Saliba into his team, he stumbled upon the ingenious move of playing White at right-back. Immediately, he made the role his own, channelling his aggression into locking up wingers, while supporting the likes of Martin Ødegaard and Bukayo Saka.

Though White claims he doesn't actually have much of an interest in watching football, it doesn't show: the defender is one of the most well-rounded players at the club, capable of offering balance between attack and defence.

And as someone who enjoys winding up the opposition with his antics, he's become as loved by fans as Arteta for his cheeky personality.

AT THE DOUBLE

White's 2023-24 season was one of his finest in an Arsenal shirt from right-back, where he played almost every minute. He got on the scoresheet four times from defence, too, including a brace against Chelsea at the Emirates Stadium. His second – a looping lob that surprised keeper Robert Sánchez – even caught Arteta off guard, who looked shocked by the technique from the sidelines.

BEN WHITE

Emirates
FLY BETTER
HEAT.RDY
VISIT RWANDA

FUN FACT

White is close with ex-Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale, having lived near one another in Dorset.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **8 OCTOBER 1997**
BIRTHPLACE: **POOLE, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **186CM (6'1")**
POSITION: **DEFENDER**
YEARS: **2021-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **4**

STATS & RECORDS

50,000,000 ARSENAL'S MOST EXPENSIVE DEFENDER IN 2021

4 WHITE HAS PLAYED IN ALL FOUR PROFESSIONAL LEAGUES IN ENGLAND

3 INDIVIDUAL AWARDS AT NEWPORT, LEEDS AND BRIGHTON, FOR PLAYER OF THE SEASON (NEWPORT AND BRIGHTON) AND YOUNG PLAYER OF THE SEASON (LEEDS)

Main image Marco Canoniero / Getty **Boxout** Zac Goodwin / Alamy

EBERECHI EZE

The playmaker let it all work out, returning to the team where his journey began

In five short years at Crystal Palace, Eberechi Eze went from being a prospect with plenty of potential to one of the biggest threats in the Premier League. Rarely had the Arsenal fan base been so united in excitement over signing a player.

With incredible dribbling skills and a killer pass in his locker, the Greenwich-born talent may well be the final piece in the jigsaw for a team who have struggled to break down deep blocks. He was hardly the first to make the short trip north of the river from Selhurst Park, following Ian Wright's lead – but not even Wrighty had delivered silverware to the Eagles. Eze left with the blessing of Palace, embarking on his life's dream to play in red-and-white – and what made it all the sweeter? Tottenham thought they had a deal in place to sign him before Mikel Arteta hijacked it. Taking the No.10 shirt simply felt like his destiny.

THE ULTIMATE HOMECOMING

When Eze stepped out onto the Emirates Stadium turf to a rapturous crowd after becoming an Arsenal player, there was hardly any containing his glee. The self-professed Gooner admitted that he "cried for a week" after being released from the club's academy as a youngster and has said that he always saw coming back to N5 as a trial. It was a move that he described as "obvious".

Fly Emirates
Arsenal

EBERECHI EZE

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **29 JUNE 1998**
BIRTHPLACE: **LONDON, ENGLAND**
NATIONALITY: **ENGLISH**
HEIGHT: **178CM (5'10")**
POSITION: **MIDFIELDER**
YEARS: **2025-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **10**

STATS & RECORDS

2 TROPHIES AT CRYSTAL PALACE - AN FA CUP AND COMMUNITY SHIELD

£67.5M THE FEE THAT ARSENAL PAID FOR EZE

40 GOALS FROM MIDFIELD IN FIVE YEARS FOR CRYSTAL PALACE

FUN FACT

Eze was born in Greenwich – ten minutes from the club's origins in Woolwich.

DID YOU KNOW? EZE ENJOYS CHESS, AND HAS EVEN POSTED A PHOTO OF HIMSELF PLAYING RICHARD BRANSON.

Main image Jon Super / Alamy **Boxout** Stuart MacFarlane / Getty

VIKTOR GYÖKERES

From smashing goal records to shirt sale records, Viktor Gyökeres became a Gunner the long way around

It was reported that upon signing for Arsenal, 'Gyökeres 14' smashed the record for shirt sales from Gooners buying new jerseys from the club shop. It's easy to see why after the hype that he arrived with.

Viktor Gyökeres left the Championship as one of the division's best players in 2023 and rose to new heights at Sporting in Portugal, delivering two back-to-back titles and scoring a whopping 97 goals in 102 games. But more than the mind-boggling stats, he won fans over immediately with his passion.

With Manchester United also interested in signing the Swedish striker, Gyökeres made it clear that he only wanted Arsenal, pushing through a move at all costs to play in North London and daring to take the iconic No.14 shirt, previously worn by Thierry Henry. He only has to score half as many goals as he did in Lisbon to be considered a hit...

GYÖKERES VS GABRIEL

Before he'd even joined the club, Arsenal's defenders knew Gyökeres well. Both Gabriel and William Saliba had their hands full facing the Swede during the 2024-25 Champions League, and he clearly got under the skin of the Brazilian: when Gabriel scored in the fixture, he celebrated with Gyökeres's trademark celebration... not that Gyökeres seemed to mind. "He's welcome to steal it if he can't create his own celebration!" he cheekily responded. "I didn't know he did that, but it's fun he likes my celebration."

Betano
Emirates
FLY BETTER

VIKTOR GYÖKERES

DID YOU KNOW? GYÖKERES'S 'MASK' CELEBRATION IS A REFERENCE TO BATMAN VILLAIN, BANE.

FUN FACT

Gyökeres became the second Swede after Zlatan Ibrahimović to score a Champions League hat-trick, in a 4-1 win over Manchester City.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: **4 JUNE 1998**
BIRTHPLACE: **STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN**
NATIONALITY: **SWEDISH**
HEIGHT: **189CM (6'2")**
POSITION: **FORWARD**
YEARS: **2025-PRESENT**
NUMBER: **14**

STATS & RECORDS

1.03 GOALS PER GAME IN PORTUGAL'S PRIMEIRA LIGA

97 GOALS - THE SECOND-HIGHEST FOREIGN SCORER IN SPORTING'S HISTORY

32 GOALS AND ASSISTS IN HIS LAST SEASON IN ENGLAND, FOR COVENTRY CITY, IN 2022-23

Main image Eddie Keogh / Getty **Boxout** SOPA Images / Getty

PAT RICE

The club's greatest-ever servant? Pat Rice was a born leader who served Arsenal with distinction across five decades

After retiring in 1984, Pat Rice came home to Arsenal and worked with the youth team to bring the next generation of young guns to the fore. He won the FA Youth Cup twice and in 1996, he'd sit by the side of Arsène Wenger as assistant manager, prepared to bark orders for the reserved Frenchman.

But that was a different life: and as a player, Rice was a fantastic leader. The Northern Irishman went from working as a greengrocer to establishing himself as a regular in Bertie Mee's first team in no time at all, becoming a steadfast defender, leading to him being given the honour of captaincy.

Rice is one of three men to have played in five FA Cup finals with the Gunners and along with Bob Wilson, was at the club for three Doubles. From the mid-1960s until 2012, there were only four years in which Rice wasn't at Arsenal. A career almost unrivalled.

BIO

DATE OF BIRTH: 17 MARCH 1949
BIRTHPLACE: BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND
NATIONALITY: NORTHERN IRISH
HEIGHT: 173CM (5'8")
POSITION: DEFENDER
YEARS: 1967-80
NUMBER: 2

STATS & RECORDS

44 YEARS AT ARSENAL, AS A TRAINEE, PLAYER AND COACH

3,630 LEAGUE MINUTES PLAYED, AS ARSENAL WON THE 1970-71 LEAGUE TITLE

10 FA CUP FINALS AS A PLAYER AND ASSISTANT COACH

MAJOR HONOURS

1x FIRST DIVISION

2x FA CUP

ARSENAL CAREER

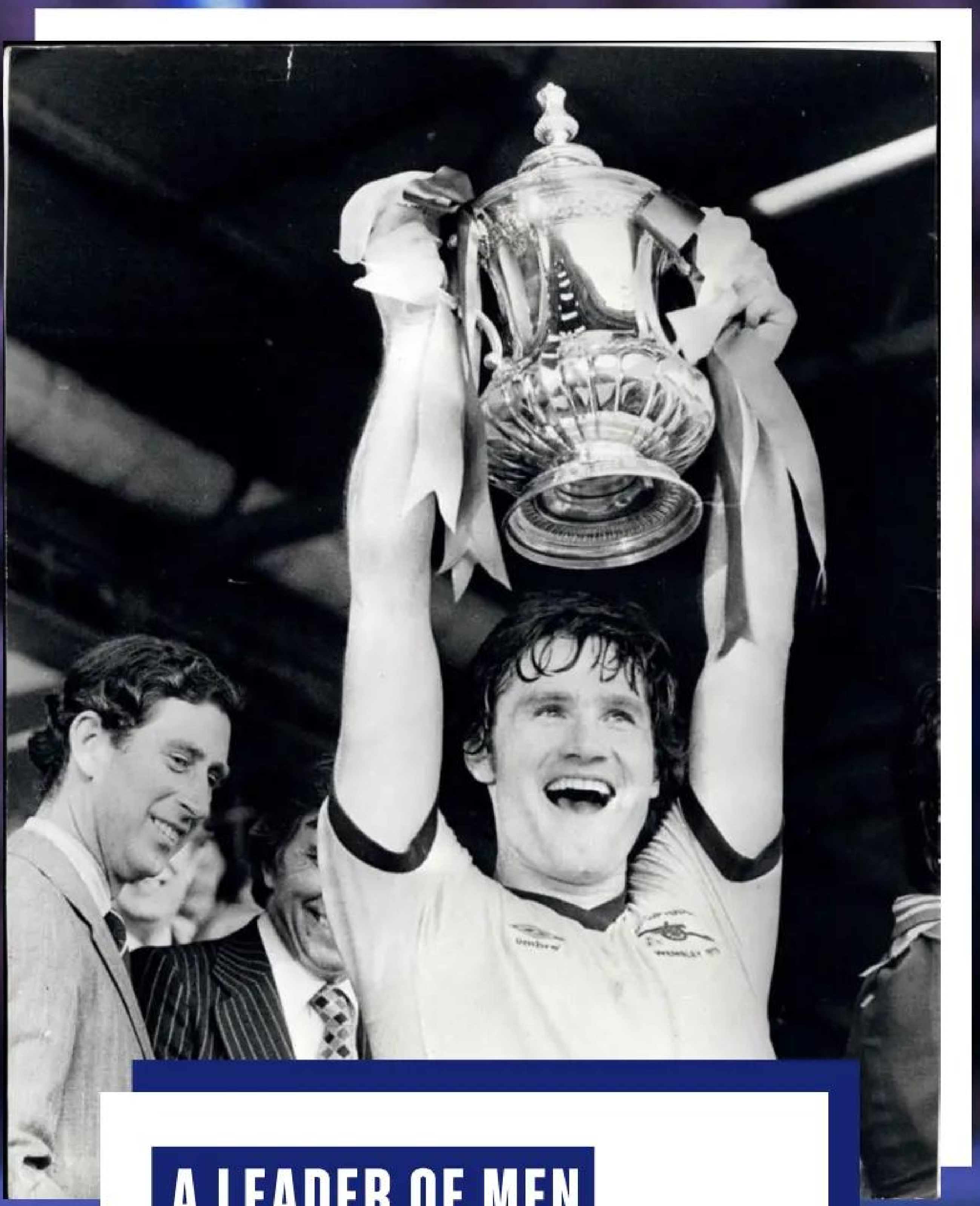
APPEARANCES
528

GOALS
13

***DID YOU KNOW?* RICE WAS CARETAKER MANAGER OF ARSENAL FOR FOUR GAMES BEFORE WENGER JOINED.**

FUN FACT

Rice won his first Northern Ireland cap while still a reserve player at Arsenal.



A LEADER OF MEN

By 1977, Rice was ten years into his Arsenal career and with the exit of World Cup-winning Alan Ball, he was handed the captaincy. Really, the Northern Irishman was a leader long before that moment: he had learned the ropes in his first senior campaign as the Gunners won the Double and later helped to steer the club away from relegation. He would lead the team to another FA Cup win in 1979 and is still regarded as one of the greatest captains to wear the armband.

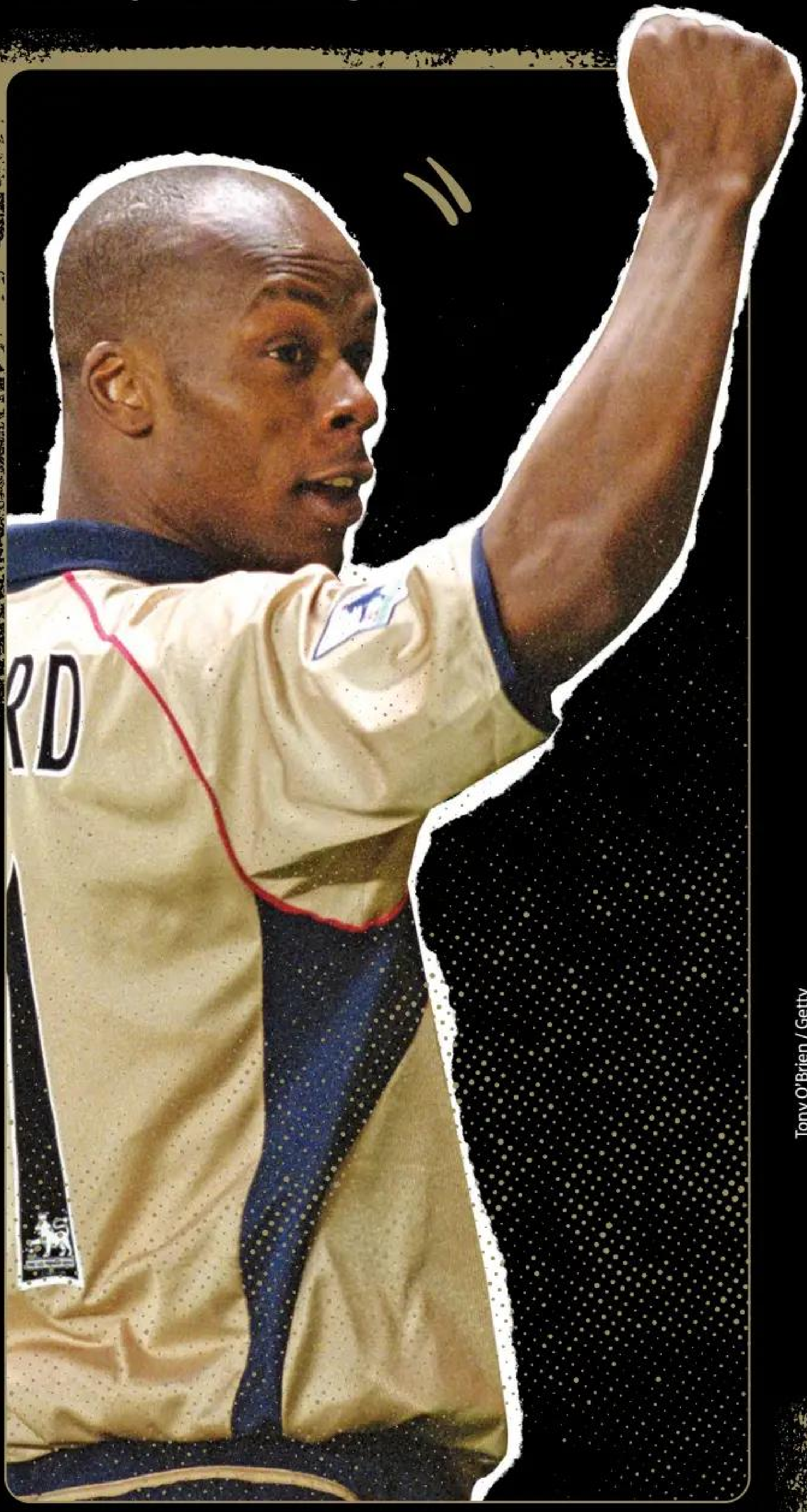
Main image S&g / Alamy **Boxout** KEYSTONE Pictures USA / Alamy

BEST OF THE REST
FORWARDS

Many great strikers have worn the cannon on their chest: from pacy poachers to towering target men

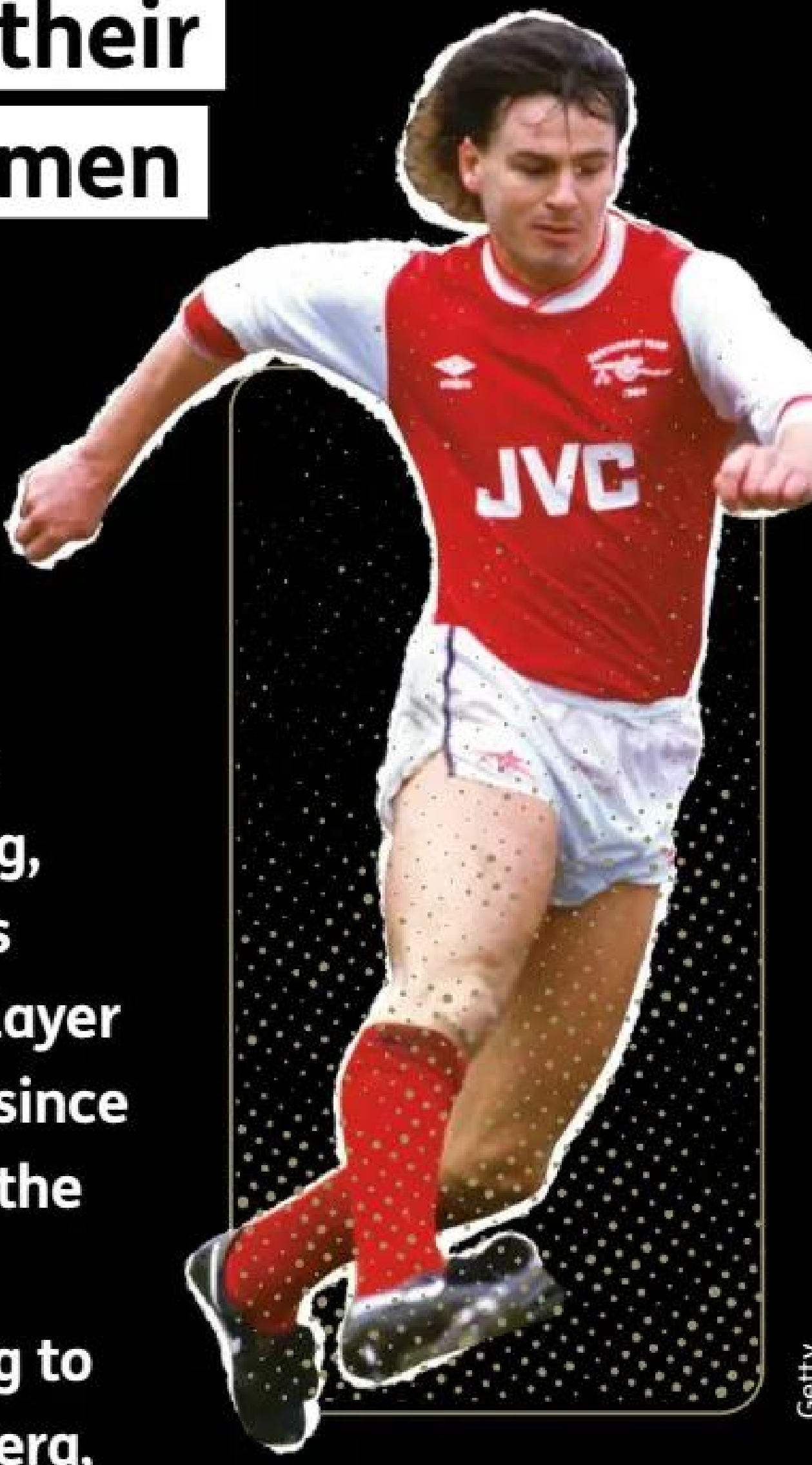
SYLVAIN WILTORD

Record signings don't often repay their fees all in one go, but Sylvain Wiltord certainly did. The Frenchman was an excellent squad player, offering both class and efficiency wherever he was deployed in the frontline – but he is forever remembered for one rebound: the goal that won the league at Old Trafford in 2002. Even now, it's impossible to hear his surname without imagining Sky Sports commentator, Martin Tyler, screaming it.



Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

CHARLIE NICHOLAS

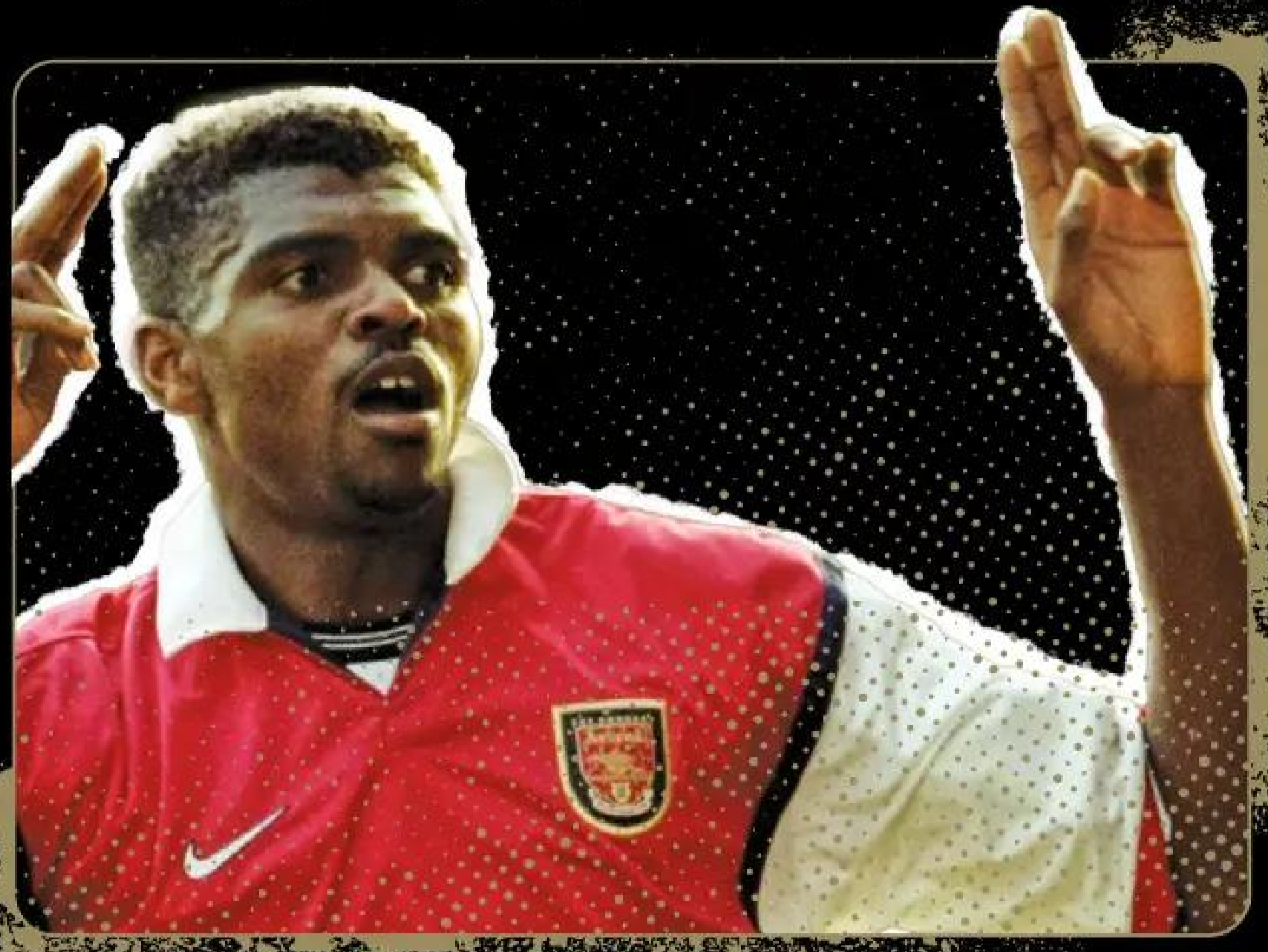


Getty

In 1983, the *Calgary Herald* reported that Arsenal's new signing, Charlie Nicholas, was "the most exciting player to emerge in Britain since George Best". While the Scotsman had the misfortune of moving to London in a difficult era, though, 'Champagne Charlie' will forever be remembered for the 1987 League Cup final brace against Liverpool, delivering a precious trophy and etching his name into the club's history. He was a character who loved life, and who earned adoration for his exploits.

NWANKWO KANU

A genuine Nigerian legend by the time he rocked up at Highbury, Nwankwo Kanu was unlike any striker who'd ever donned red-and-white. He was tall and slender, the ball stuck to his feet like Velcro, and he was capable of the impossible: a hat-trick at Chelsea showed how, with his third goal an audacious strike from the touchline. He became a cult figure on the terraces for a brand of brilliance that no one else could possibly replicate.

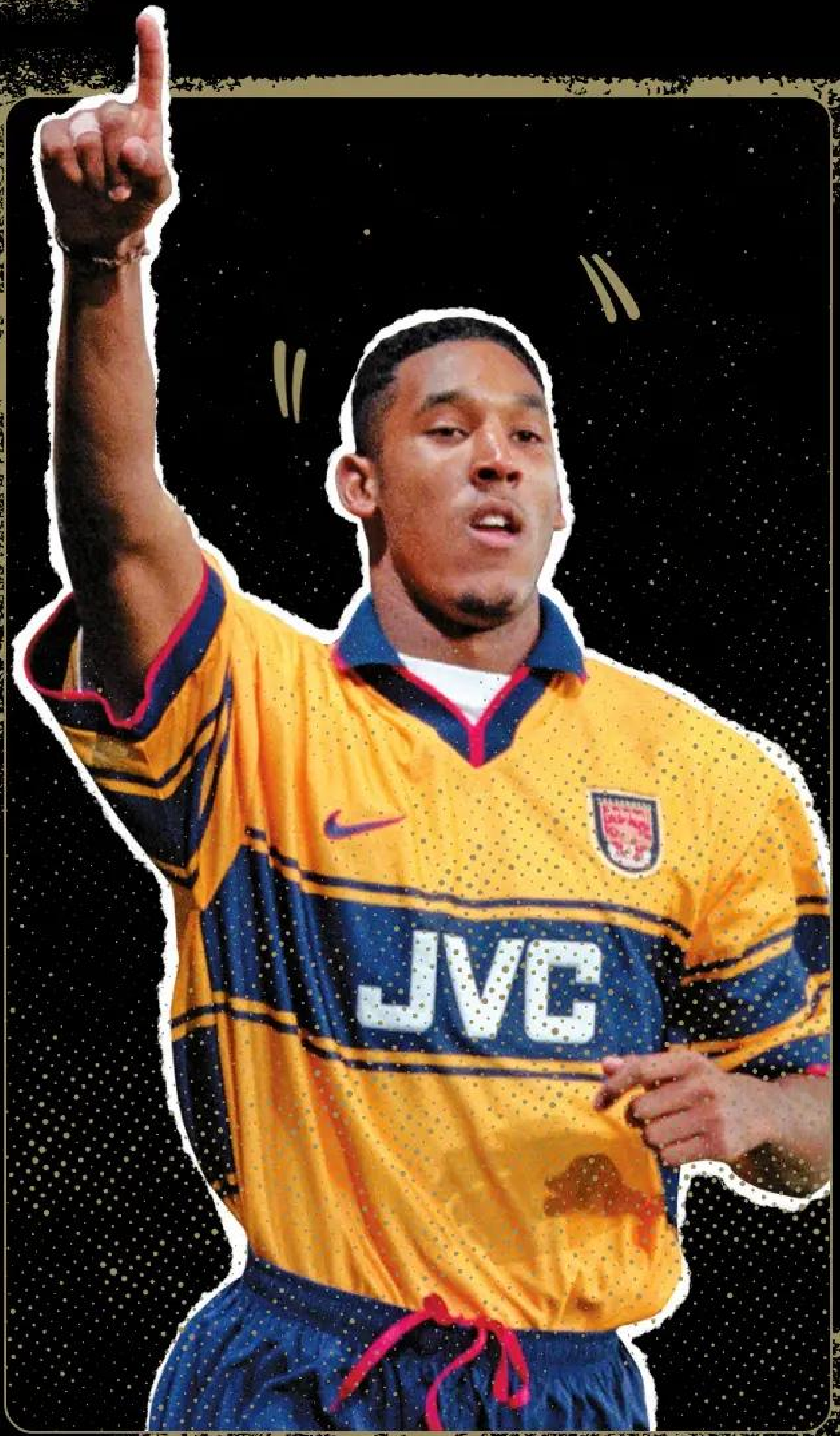


Tony O'Brien / Getty

CLIFF BASTIN

J. A. Hampton / Getty

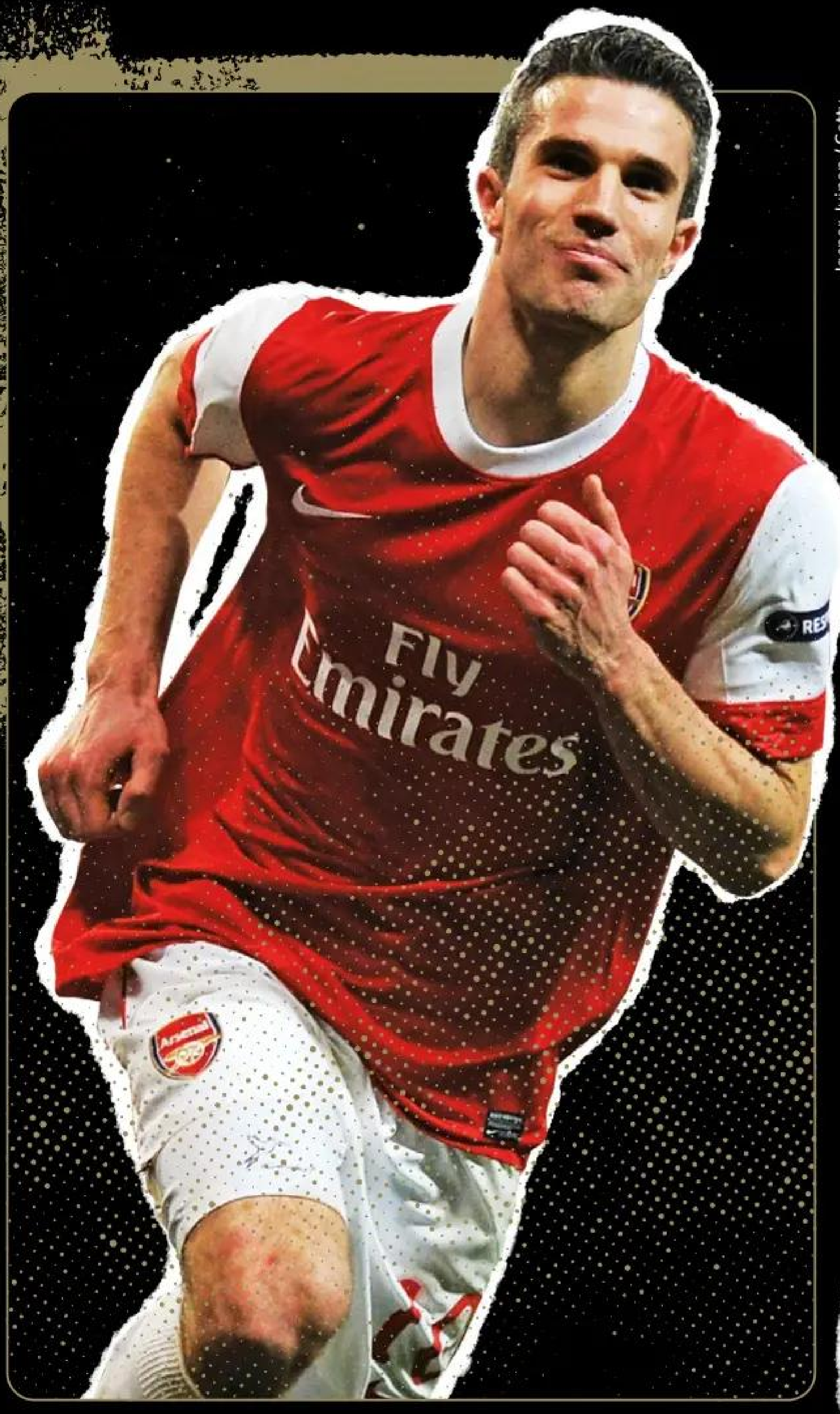
For 58 years, Cliff Bastin was untouchable. He scored 178 goals for the Gunners – without even playing up front. After seeing him tear up the third division at the age of 17, visionary manager Herbert Chapman was so in awe of Bastin that he signed him immediately: two years later, he won a league title, FA Cup and was capped for England, becoming the youngest player ever to achieve all three. He's still third in the all-time scoring list, behind Ian Wright and Thierry Henry.



Mark Leech/Offside / Getty

NICOLAS ANELKA

It took Ian Wright one look at Nicolas Anelka to realise that this was the boy that would replace him. With electric speed and a natural eye for goal, Anelka took the Gunners to the Double in 1998 with typical style, naturally, alerting Real Madrid to his brilliance. Arsène Wenger never wanted to sell him – but the record fee did at least finance a new training ground at London Colney.

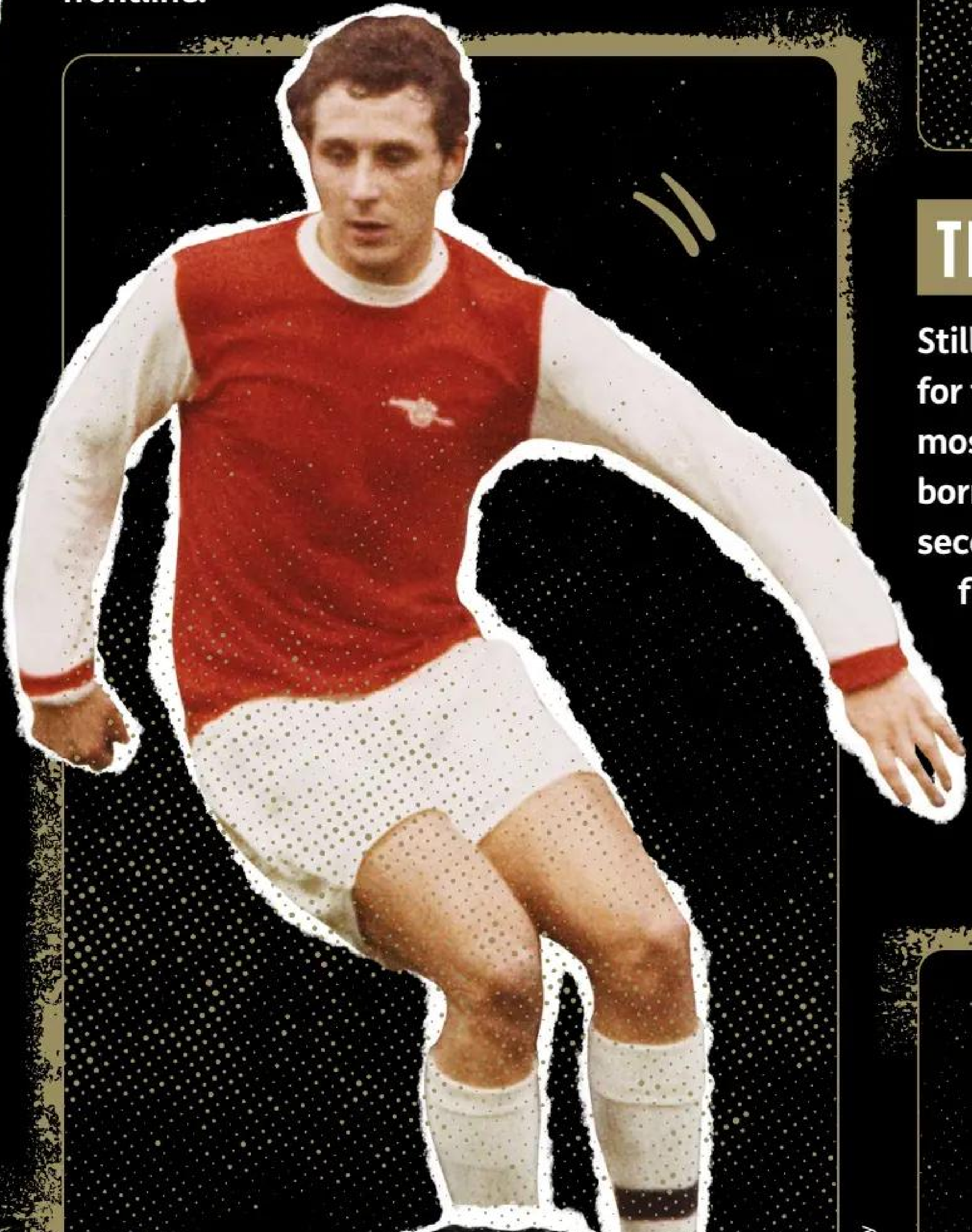

Jasper Juinen / Getty

ROBIN VAN PERSIE

The less said about leaving for Manchester United, the better: all controversy aside, Robin van Persie is still Arsenal's finest striker this side of Thierry Henry. The Dutchman would carry the club on his back during the early Emirates Stadium years: there may not be a player in the modern game who could hit a ball first time like him. Just watch any volley he struck: he really was a complete striker, and a natural one, at that.

JOHN RADFORD

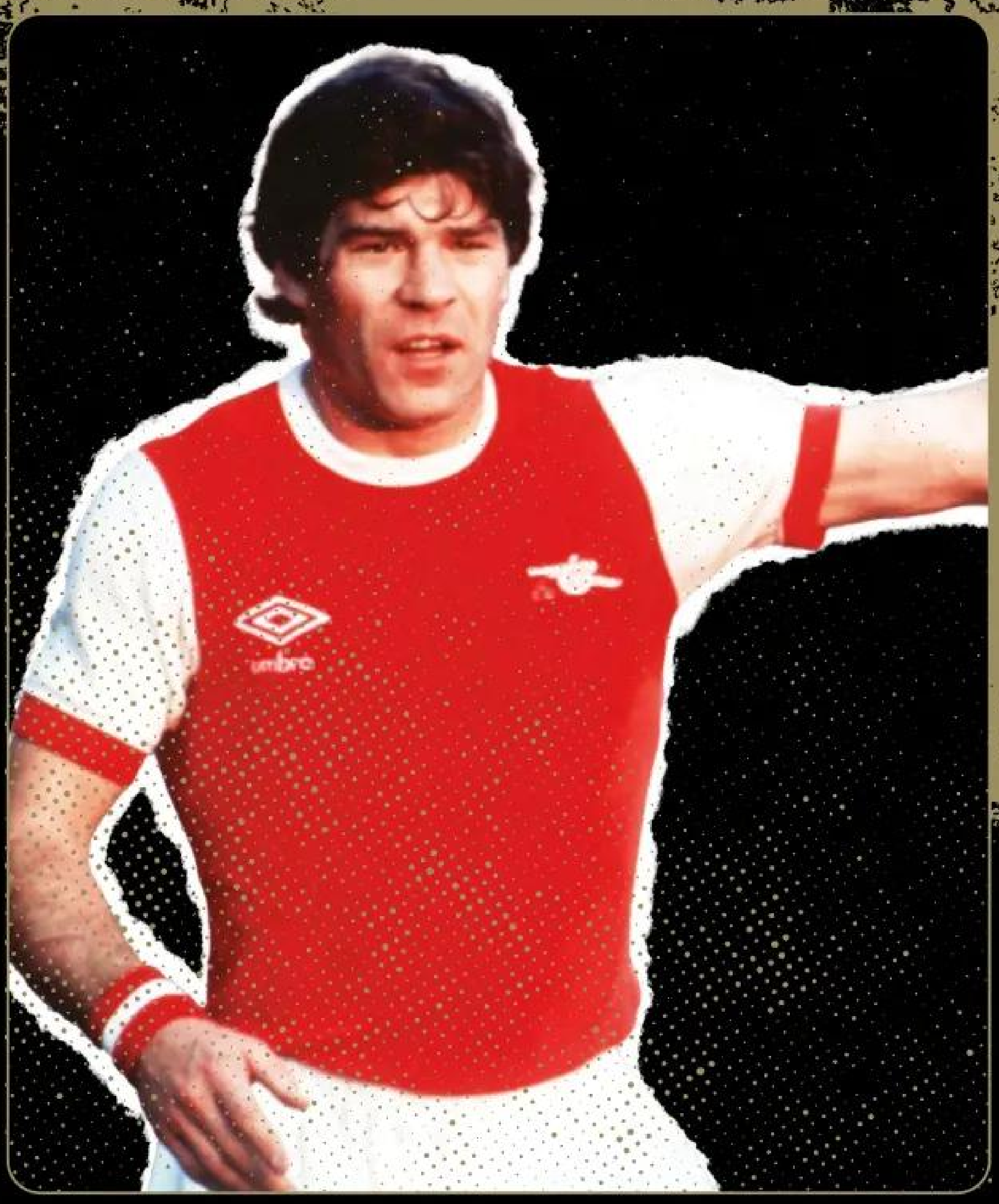
Whether out on the wing or in a partnership with Ray Kennedy, John Radford was a reliable fixture in the goalscoring charts under Bertie Mee – but he was far from a polished poacher. The Yorkshireman had an edge to him, would get stuck in and typified the never-say-die attitude of the Gunners. He scored 19, 19 and 21 in three seasons that culminated in the Double win, with Kennedy netting 26 himself in a formidable frontline.


Getty

Fox Photos / Getty

TED DRAKE

Still the record-holder for most goals in a season for the Gunners, Ted Drake was one of Arsenal's most prolific-ever finishers. The Southampton-born forward netted 42 in 41 games in his second season, holds the record for most top-flight goals in a game (a magnificent seven) and were it not for the war and injuries, he may well have become Arsenal's all-time scorer, with an insurmountable total. He still has the best goals-to-games ratio of any Gunner with more than 125 goals.


PA Images / Alamy

MALCOLM MACDONALD

Few players have delivered on their hype quite so quickly as Malcolm Macdonald. In his debut, against the club he'd just left, Newcastle United, 'Supermac' netted an impressive hat-trick, showing Gooners exactly what they'd be getting. Though he struggled with fitness and never quite captured his brilliant best in N5, he was a bright spark, and is still well loved by those who remember the excitement his signing brought.

ALEXIS SÁNCHEZ

With a stocky build and the energy of a Labrador, Alexis Sánchez was effervescent, excitable and eager to please. The Chilean arrived with big expectations and lifted Arsène Wenger's side with goals in huge moments and a one-man press. He was just unplayable at his best, a forward of unbelievable pace and precision, and he would become his country's greatest-ever star while in North London.

Jamie McDonald / Getty

ARSENAL ALL-STARS

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TOP 10 MOMENTS
TOP 10
MOMENTS
Every Gooner has a pantheon of magic memories – these are the few that define the club's history

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